THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE



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THE AUTOCRAT OF THE
BREAKFAST-TABLE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD PYLE

IN TWO VOLUMES


The
Autocrat in 1885
painted by
Howard Pyle
in 1893.

The Autocrat

Of the Breakfast-Table

By Oliver Wendell Holmes

With Illustrations by

Howard Pyle

II



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	PAGE
Oliver Wendell Holmes at the age of 76. (*Photogravure*) . . . Frontispiece	
Headpiece to Part VII	221
The Last Blossom	241
The Professor in his Boat (*Photogravure*) . .	254
The Living Temple	261
Headpiece to Part VIII	263
Into the River (*Photogravure*)	276
Spring Has Come	293
Headpiece to Part IX	295
First Love (*Photogravure*)	312
A Good Time Going	331
The Two Armies	334
Tailpiece	336
Headpiece to Part X	337
The First Walk (*Photogravure*)	358
Musa	370
Tailpiece	372
Headpiece to Part XI	373
The Deacon's Masterpiece	376
Æstivation	390
The Mountain Home (*Photogravure*) . . .	392

Contentment 397
Tailpiece 411
Headpiece to Part XII 412
Parson Turell's Legacy 440
Parson Turell's Legacy (*Photogravure*) . . . 444
The Voiceless 452
Tailpiece 463

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table



VII

THIS particular record is noteworthy principally for containing a paper by my friend, the Professor, with a poem or two annexed or intercalated. I would suggest to young persons that they should pass over it for the present, and read, instead of it, that story about the young man who was in love with the young lady, and in great trouble for something like nine pages, but happily married on the tenth page or thereabouts, which, I take it for granted, will be contained in the periodical where this is found, unless it differ from all other publications of the kind.

Perhaps, if such young people will lay the number aside, and take it up ten years, or a little more, from the present time, they may find something in it for their advantage. They can't possibly understand it all now.]

My friend, the Professor, began talking with me one day in a dreary sort of way. I could n't get at the difficulty for a good while, but at last it turned out that somebody had been calling him an old man. — He did n't mind his students calling him *the* old man, he said. That was a technical expression, and he thought that he remembered hearing it applied to himself when he was about twenty-five. It may be considered as a familiar and sometimes endearing appellation. An Irishwoman calls her husband "the old man," and he returns the caressing expression by speaking of her as "the old woman." But now, said he, just suppose a case like one of these. A young stranger is overheard talking of you as a very nice old gentleman. A friendly and genial critic speaks of your green old age as illustrating the truth of some axiom you had uttered with reference to that period of life. What *I* call an old man is a person

with a smooth, shining crown and a fringe of scattered white hairs, seen in the streets on sunshiny days, stooping as he walks, bearing a cane, moving cautiously and slowly; telling old stories, smiling at present follies, living in a narrow world of dry habits; one that remains waking when others have dropped asleep, and keeps a little night-lamp-flame of life burning year after year, if the lamp is not upset, and there is only a careful hand held round it to prevent the puffs of wind from blowing the flame out. That 's what I call an old man.

Now, said the Professor, you don't mean to tell me that I have got to that yet? Why, bless you, I am several years short of the time when — [I knew what was coming, and could hardly keep from laughing; twenty years ago he used to quote it as one of those absurd speeches men of genius will make, and now he is going to argue from it] — several years short of the time when Balzac says that men are — most — you know — dangerous to — the hearts of — in short, most to be dreaded by duennas that have charge of susceptible females. — What age is that? said I, statistically. — Fifty-two years, answered the Professor. — Balzac

ought to know, said I, if it is true that Goethe said of him that each of his stories must have been dug out of a woman's heart. But fifty-two is a high figure.

Stand in the light of the window, Professor, said I. — The Professor took up the desired position. — You have white hairs, I said. — Had 'em any time these twenty years, said the Professor. — And the crow's-foot, — *pes anserinus*, rather. — The Professor smiled, as I wanted him to, and the folds radiated like the ridges of a half-opened fan, from the outer corner of the eyes to the temples. — And the calipers, said I. — What are the *calipers?* he asked, curiously. — Why, the parenthesis, said I. — *Parenthesis?* said the Professor; what's that? — Why look in the glass when you are disposed to laugh, and see if your mouth is n't framed in a couple of crescent lines, — so, my boy ( ). — It 's all nonsense, said the Professor; just look at my *biceps;* — and he began pulling off his coat to show me his arm. Be careful, said I; you can't bear exposure to the air, at your time of life, as you could once. — I will box with you, said the Professor, row with you, walk with you, ride with you, swim with you, or sit at

table with you, for fifty dollars a side. — Pluck survives stamina, I answered.

The Professor went off a little out of humor. A few weeks afterwards he came in, looking very good-natured, and brought me a paper, which I have here, and from which I shall read you some portions, if you don't object. He had been thinking the matter over, he said, — had read Cicero "De Senectute," and made up his mind to meet old age half way. These were some of his reflections which he had written down; so here you have

THE PROFESSOR'S PAPER.

There is no doubt when old age begins. The human body is a furnace which keeps in blast three-score years and ten, more or less. It burns about three hundred pounds of carbon a year (besides other fuel), when in fair working order, according to a great chemist's estimate. When the fire slackens, life declines; when it goes out, we are dead.

It has been shown by some noted French experimenters, that the amount of combustion increases up to about the thirtieth year, remains stationary to about forty-five, and

then diminishes. This last is the point where old age starts from. The great fact of physical life is the perpetual commerce with the elements, and the fire is the measure of it.

About this time of life, if food is plenty where you live, — for that, you know, regulates matrimony, — you may be expecting to find yourself a grandfather some fine morning; a kind of domestic felicity which gives one a cool shiver of delight to think of, as among the not remotely possible events.

I don't mind much those slipshod lines Dr. Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale, telling her about life's declining from *thirty-five;* the furnace is in full blast for ten years longer, as I have said. The Romans came very near the mark; their age of enlistment reached from seventeen to forty-six years.

What is the use of fighting against the seasons, or the tides, or the movements of the planetary bodies, or this ebb in the wave of life that flows through us? We are old fellows from the moment the fire begins to go out. Let us always behave like gentlemen when we are introduced to new acquaintances.

Incipit Allegoria Senectutis.

Old Age, this is Mr. Professor; Mr. Professor, this is Old Age.

Old Age. — Mr. Professor, I hope to see you well. I have known you for some time, though I think you did not know me. Shall we walk down the street together?

Professor (drawing back a little). — We can talk more quietly, perhaps, in my study. Will you tell me how it is you seem to be acquainted with everybody you are introduced to, though he evidently considers you an entire stranger?

Old Age. — I make it a rule never to force myself upon a person's recognition until I have known him at least *five years.*

Professor. — Do you mean to say that you have known me so long as that?

Old Age. — I do. I left my card on you longer ago than that, but I am afraid you never read it; yet I see you have it with you.

Professor. — Where?

Old Age. — There, between your eyebrows, — three straight lines running up and down; all the probate courts know that token, — "Old Age, his mark." Put your forefinger on the inner end of one eyebrow,

and your middle finger on the inner end of the other eyebrow ; now separate the fingers, and you will smooth out my sign-manual ; that 's the way you used to look before I left my card on you.

Professor. — What message do people generally send back when you first call on them ?

Old Age. — *Not at home.* Then I leave a card and go. Next year I call ; get the same answer ; leave another card. So for five or six, — sometimes ten years or more. At last, if they don't let me in, I break in through the front door or the windows.

We talked together in this way some time. Then Old Age said again, — Come, let us walk down the street together, — and offered me a cane, an eyeglass, a tippet, and a pair of overshoes. — No, much obliged to you, said I. I don't want those things, and I had a little rather talk with you here, privately, in my study. So I dressed myself up in a jaunty way and walked out alone ; — got a fall, caught a cold, was laid up with a lumbago, and had time to think over this whole matter.

Explicit Allegoria Senectutis.

We have settled when old age begins.

Like all Nature's processes, it is gentle and gradual in its approaches, strewed with illusions, and all its little griefs are soothed by natural sedatives. But the iron hand is not less irresistible because it wears the velvet glove. The button-wood throws off its bark in large flakes, which one may find lying at its foot, pushed out, and at last pushed off, by that tranquil movement from beneath, which is too slow to be seen, but too powerful to be arrested. One finds them always, but one rarely sees them fall. So it is our youth drops from us, — scales off, sapless and lifeless, and lays bare the tender and immature fresh growth of old age. Looked at collectively, the changes of old age appear as a series of personal insults and indignities, terminating at last in death, which Sir Thomas Browne has called "the very disgrace and ignominy of our natures."

> My lady's cheek can boast no more
> The cranberry white and pink it wore;
> And where her shining locks divide,
> The parting line is all too wide —

No, no, — this will never do. Talk about men, if you will, but spare the poor women.

We have a brief description of seven stages of life by a remarkably good observer.

It is very presumptuous to attempt to add to it, yet I have been struck with the fact that life admits of a natural analysis into no less than fifteen distinct periods. Taking the five primary divisions, infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, old age, each of these has its own three periods of immaturity, complete development, and decline. I recognize an *old* baby at once, — with its "pipe and mug" (a stick of candy and a porringer), — so does everybody; and an old child shedding its milk-teeth is only a little prototype of the old man shedding his permanent ones. Fifty or thereabouts is only the childhood, as it were, of old age; the graybeard youngster must be weaned from his late suppers now. So you will see that you have to make fifteen stages at any rate, and that it would not be hard to make twenty-five; five primary, each with five secondary divisions.

The infancy and childhood of commencing old age have the same ingenuous simplicity and delightful unconsciousness about them that are shown by the first stage of the earlier periods of life. The great delusion of mankind is in supposing that to be individual and exceptional which is universal and according to law. A person is always star-

tled when he hears himself seriously called an old man for the first time.

Nature gets us out of youth into manhood, as sailors are hurried on board of vessels, — in a state of intoxication. We are hustled into maturity reeling with our passions and imaginations, and we have drifted far away from port before we awake out of our illusions. But to carry us out of maturity into old age, without our knowing where we are going, she drugs us with strong opiates, and so we stagger along with wide open eyes that see nothing until snow enough has fallen on our heads to rouse our half comatose brains out of their stupid trances.

There is one mark of age which strikes me more than any of the physical ones; — I mean the formation of *Habits*. An old man who shrinks into himself falls into ways which become as positive and as much beyond the reach of outside influences as if they were governed by clock-work. The *animal* functions, as the physiologists call them, in distinction from the *organic*, tend, in the process of deterioration to which age and neglect united gradually lead them, to assume the periodical or rhythmical type of movement. Every man's *heart* (this organ

belongs, you know, to the organic system) has a regular mode of action; but I know a great many men whose *brains*, and all their voluntary existence flowing from their brains, have a *systole* and *diastole* as regular as that of the heart itself. Habit is the approximation of the animal system to the organic. It is a confession of failure in the highest function of being, which involves a perpetual self-determination, in full view of all existing circumstances. But habit, you see, is an action in present circumstances from past motives. It is substituting a *vis a tergo* for the evolution of living force.

When a man, instead of burning up three hundred pounds of carbon a year, has got down to two hundred and fifty, it is plain enough he must economize force somewhere. Now habit is a labor-saving invention which enables a man to get along with less fuel, — that is all; for fuel is force, you know, just as much in the page I am writing for you as in the locomotive or the legs which carry it to you. Carbon is the same thing, whether you call it wood, or coal, or bread and cheese. A reverend gentleman demurred to this statement, — as if, because combustion is asserted to be the *sine qua non* of thought,

therefore thought is alleged to be a purely chemical process. Facts of chemistry are one thing, I told him, and facts of consciousness another. It can be proved to him, by a very simple analysis of some of his spare elements, that every Sunday, when he does his duty faithfully, he uses up more phosphorus out of his brain and nerves than on ordinary days. But then he had his choice whether to do his duty, or to neglect it, and save his phosphorus and other combustibles.

It follows from all this that *the formation of habits* ought naturally to be, as it is, the special characteristic of age. As for the muscular powers, they pass their maximum long before the time when the true decline of life begins, if we may judge by the experience of the ring. A man is "stale," I think, in their language, soon after thirty, — often, no doubt, much earlier, as gentlemen of the pugilistic profession are exceedingly apt to keep their vital fire burning *with the blower up*.

— So far without Tully. But in the mean time I have been reading the treatise, "De Senectute." It is not long, but is a leisurely performance. The old gentleman

was sixty-three years of age when he addressed it to his friend, T. Pomponius Atticus, Eq., a person of distinction, some two or three years older. We read it when we are school-boys, forget all about it for thirty years, and then take it up again by a natural instinct, — provided always that we read Latin as we drink water, without stopping to taste it, as all of us who ever learned it at school or college ought to do.

Cato is the chief speaker in the dialogue. A good deal of it is what would be called in vulgar phrase "slow." It unpacks and unfolds incidental illustrations which a modern writer would look at the back of, and toss each to its pigeon-hole. I think ancient classics and ancient people are alike in the tendency to this kind of expansion.

An old doctor came to me once (this is literal fact) with some contrivance or other for people with broken kneepans. As the patient would be confined for a good while, he might find it dull work to sit with his hands in his lap. Reading, the ingenious inventor suggested, would be an agreeable mode of passing the time. He mentioned, in his written account of his contrivance, various works which might amuse the weary

hour. I remember only three. — Don Quixote. Tom Jones, and *Watts on the Mind.*

It is not generally understood that Cicero's essay was delivered as a lyceum lecture (*concio popularis*) at the Temple of Mercury. The journals (*papyri*) of the day ("Tempora Quotidiana." — "Tribunus Quirinalis," — "Præco Romanus." and the rest) gave abstracts of it, one of which I have translated and modernized, as being a substitute for the analysis I intended to make.

IV. Kal Mart. . . .

The lecture at the Temple of Mercury, last evening, was well attended by the *élite* of our great city. Two hundred thousand sestertia were thought to have been represented in the house. The doors were besieged by a mob of shabby fellows (*illotum vulgus*), who were at length quieted after two or three had been somewhat roughly handled (*gladio jugulati*). The speaker was the well-known Mark Tully, Eq.. — the subject Old Age. Mr. T. has a lean and scraggy person, with a very unpleasant excrescence upon his nasal feature, from which his nickname of *chick-pea* (Cicero) is said by some to be derived. As a lecturer is

public property, we may remark, that his outer garment (*toga*) was of cheap stuff and somewhat worn, and that his general style and appearance of dress and manner (*habitus, vestitusque*) were somewhat provincial.

The lecture consisted of an imaginary dialogue between Cato and Lælius. We found the first portion rather heavy, and retired a few moments for refreshment (*pocula quædam vini*). — All want to reach old age, says Cato, and grumble when they get it; therefore they are donkeys. — The lecturer will allow us to say that he is the donkey; we know we shall grumble at old age, but we want to live through youth and manhood, *in spite* of the troubles we shall groan over. — There was considerable prosing as to what old age can do and can't. — True, but not new. Certainly, old folks can't jump, — break the necks of their thigh-bones (*femorum cervices*), if they do; can't crack nuts with their teeth; can't climb a greased pole (*malum inunctum scandere non possunt*); but they can tell old stories and give you good advice; if they know what you have made up your mind to do when you ask them. — All this is well enough, but won't

set the Tiber on fire (*Tiberim accendere nequaquam potest*).

There were some clever things enough (*dicta haud inepta*), a few of which are worth reporting. — Old people are accused of being forgetful; but they never forget where they have put their money. — Nobody is so old he does n't think he can live a year. — The lecturer quoted an ancient maxim, — Grow old early, if you would be old long, — but disputed it. — Authority, he thought, was the chief privilege of age. — It is not great to have money, but fine to govern those who have it. — Old age begins at *forty-six* years, according to the common opinion. — It is not every kind of old age or of wine that grows sour with time. — Some excellent remarks were made on immortality, but mainly borrowed from and credited to Plato. — Several pleasing anecdotes were told. — Old Milo, champion of the heavy weights in his day, looked at his arms and whimpered, "They are dead." Not so dead as you, you old fool, — says Cato; — you never were good for anything but for your shoulders and flanks. — Pisistratus asked Solon what made him dare to be so obstinate. Old age, said Solon.

The lecture was on the whole acceptable, and a credit to our culture and civilization. — The reporter goes on to state that there will be no lecture next week, on account of the expected combat between the bear and the barbarian. Betting (*sponsio*) two to one (*duo ad unum*) on the bear.

— After all, the most encouraging things I find in the treatise, "De Senectute," are the stories of men who have found new occupations when growing old, or kept up their common pursuits in the extreme period of life. Cato learned Greek when he was old, and speaks of wishing to learn the fiddle, or some such instrument (*fidibus*), after the example of Socrates. Solon learned something new every day, in his old age, as he gloried to proclaim. Cyrus pointed out with pride and pleasure the trees he had planted with his own hand. [I remember a pillar on the Duke of Northumberland's estate at Alnwick, with an inscription in similar words, if not the same. That, like other country pleasures, never wears out. None is too rich, none too poor, none too young, none too old to enjoy it.] There is a New England story I have heard, more to the

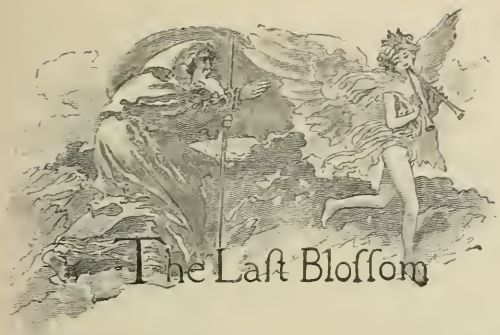
point, however, than any of Cicero's. A young farmer was urged to set out some apple-trees. — No, said he, they are too long growing, and I don't want to plant for other people. The young farmer's father was spoken to about it, but he, with better reason, alleged that apple-trees were slow and life was fleeting. At last some one mentioned it to the old grandfather of the young farmer. He had nothing else to do, — so he stuck in some trees. He lived long enough to drink barrels of cider made from the apples that grew on those trees.

As for myself, after visiting a friend lately, — [Do remember all the time that this is the Professor's paper.] — I satisfied myself that I had better concede the fact that, — my contemporaries are not so young as they have been, — and that, — awkward as it is, — science and history agree in telling me that I can claim the immunities and must own the humiliations of the early stage of senility. Ah! but we have all gone down the hill together. The dandies of my time have split their waistbands and taken to high low shoes. The beauties of my recollections — where are they? They have run the gauntlet of the years as well

as I. First the years pelted them with red roses till their cheeks were all on fire. By and by they began throwing white roses, and that morning flush passed away. At last one of the years threw a snow-ball, and after that no year let the poor girls pass without throwing snow-balls. And then came rougher missiles, — ice and stones; and from time to time an arrow whistled, and down went one of the poor girls. So there are but few left; and we don't call those few *girls*, but —

Ah, me! here am I groaning just as the old Greek sighed Αἴ, αἴ! and the old Roman, *Eheu!* I have no doubt we should die of shame and grief at the indignities offered us by age, if it were not that we see so many others as badly as or worse off than ourselves. We always compare ourselves with our contemporaries.

[I was interrupted in my reading just here. Before I began at the next breakfast, I read them these verses; — I hope you will like them, and get a useful lesson from them.]



THOUGH young no more, we still would dream
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles;
The leagues of life to graybeards seem
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice?
It played with Goethe's silver hair,
And many a Holy Father's "niece"
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,
We think upon those ladies twain
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her Lord's Olympian smile
His lotus-loving Memphian lies,—

The musky daughter of the Nile
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet
The morning of that blissful day
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,
And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,
A lasso, with its leaping chain
Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew
O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,
Sweet vision, waited for so long!
Dove that would seek the poet's cage
Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid,
Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told;
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade
Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms! — love heeds not years.
No frost the bud of passion knows. —
Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?
A voice behind me uttered, — Rose!

Sweet was her smile, — but not for me;
Alas, when woman looks *too* kind,
Just turn your foolish head and see, —
Some youth is walking close behind!

As to *giving up* because the almanac or the Family-Bible says that it is about time to do it, I have no intention of doing any such thing. I grant you that I burn less carbon than some years ago. I see people of my standing really good for nothing, decrepit, effete, *la lèvre inférieure déjà pendante*, with what little life they have left mainly concentrated in their epigastrium. But as the disease of old age is epidemic, endemic, and sporadic, and everybody who lives long enough is sure to catch it, I am going to say, for the encouragement of such as need it, how I treat the malady in my own case.

First. As I feel, that, when I have anything to do, there is less time for it than when I was younger, I find that I give my attention more thoroughly, and use my time more economically than ever before; so that I can learn anything twice as easily as in my earlier days. I am not, therefore, afraid to attack a new study. I took up a difficult language a very few years ago with good success, and think of mathematics and metaphysics by and by.

Secondly. I have opened my eyes to a good many neglected privileges and pleas-

ures within my reach, and requiring only a little courage to enjoy them. You may well suppose it pleased me to find that old Cato was thinking of learning to play the fiddle, when I had deliberately taken it up in my old age, and satisfied myself that I could get much comfort, if not much music, out of it.

Thirdly. I have found that some of those active exercises, which are commonly thought to belong to young folks only, may be enjoyed at a much later period.

A young friend has lately written an admirable article in one of the journals, entitled, "Saints and their Bodies." Approving of his general doctrines, and grateful for his records of personal experience, I cannot refuse to add my own experimental confirmation of his eulogy of one particular form of active exercise and amusement, namely, *boating*. For the past nine years, I have rowed about, during a good part of the summer, on fresh or salt water. My present fleet on the river Charles consists of three row-boats. 1. A small flat-bottomed skiff of the shape of a flat-iron, kept mainly to lend to boys. 2. A fancy "dory" for two pairs of sculls, in which I sometimes go out with my young folks. 3. My own par-

ticular water-sulky, a "skeleton" or "shell" race-boat, twenty-two feet long, with huge outriggers, which boat I pull with ten-foot sculls, — alone, of course, as it holds but one, and tips him out, if he does n't mind what he is about. In this I glide around the Back Bay, down the stream, up the Charles to Cambridge and Watertown, up the Mystic, round the wharves, in the wake of steamboats, which leave a swell after them delightful to rock upon; I linger under the bridges, — those "caterpillar bridges," as my brother professor so happily called them; rub against the black sides of old wood-schooners; cool down under the overhanging stern of some tall Indiaman; stretch across to the Navy Yard, where the sentinel warns me off from the Ohio, — just as if I should hurt her by lying in her shadow; then strike out into the harbor, where the water gets clear and the air smells of the ocean, — till all at once I remember, that, if a west wind blows up of a sudden, I shall drift along past the islands, out of sight of the dear old State-house, — plate, tumbler, knife and fork all waiting, at home, but no chair drawn up at the table, — all the dear people waiting, waiting,

waiting, while the boat is sliding, sliding, sliding into the great desert, where there is no tree and no fountain. As I don't want my wreck to be washed up on one of the beaches in company with devil's-aprons, bladder-weeds, dead horse-shoes, and bleached crab-shells, I turn about and flap my long, narrow wings for home. When the tide is running out swiftly, I have a splendid fight to get through the bridges, but always make it a rule to beat, — though I have been jammed up into pretty tight places at times, and was caught once between a vessel swinging round and the pier, until our bones (the boat's, that is) cracked as if we had been in the jaws of Behemoth. Then back to my moorings at the foot of the Common, off with the rowing-dress, dash under the green translucent wave, return to the garb of civilization, walk through my Garden, take a look at my elms on the Common, and, reaching my habitat, in consideration of my advanced period of life, indulge in the Elysian abandonment of a huge recumbent chair.

When I have established a pair of well-pronounced feathering-calluses on my thumbs, when I am in training so that I

can do my fifteen miles at a stretch without coming to grief in any way, when I can perform my mile in eight minutes or a little more, then I feel as if I had old Time's head in chancery, and could give it to him at my leisure.

I do not deny the attraction of walking. I have bored this ancient city through and through in my daily travels, until I know it as an old inhabitant of a Cheshire knows his cheese. Why, it was I who, in the course of these rambles, discovered that remarkable avenue called *Myrtle Street*, stretching in one long line from east of the Reservoir to a precipitous and rudely paved cliff which looks down on the grim abode of Science, and beyond it to the far hills; a promenade so delicious in its repose, so cheerfully varied with glimpses down the northern slope into busy Cambridge Street with its iron river of the horse-railroad, and wheeled barges gliding back and forward over it, — so delightfully closing at its western extremity in sunny courts and passages where I know peace, and beauty, and virtue, and serene old age must be perpetual tenants, — so alluring to all who desire to take their daily stroll, in the words of Dr. Watts, —

"Alike unknowing and unknown," —

that nothing but a sense of duty would have prompted me to reveal the secret of its existence. I concede, therefore, that walking is an immeasurably fine invention, of which old age ought constantly to avail itself.

Saddle-leather is in some respects even preferable to sole-leather. The principal objection to it is of a financial character. But you may be sure that Bacon and Sydenham did not recommend it for nothing. One's *hepar*, or, in vulgar language, liver, — a ponderous organ, weighing some three or four pounds, — goes up and down like the dasher of a churn in the midst of the other vital arrangements, at every step of a trotting horse. The brains also are shaken up like coppers in a money-box. Riding is good, for those that are born with a silver-mounted bridle in their hand, and can ride as much and as often as they like, without thinking all the time they hear that steady grinding sound as the horse's jaws triturate with calm lateral movement the bank-bills and promises to pay upon which it is notorious that the profligate animal in question feeds day and night.

Instead, however, of considering these

kinds of exercise in this empirical way, I will devote a brief space to an examination of them in a more scientific form.

The pleasure of exercise is due first to a purely physical impression, and secondly to a sense of power in action. The first source of pleasure varies of course with our condition and the state of the surrounding circumstances; the second with the amount and kind of power, and the extent and kind of action. In all forms of active exercise there are three powers simultaneously in action, — the will, the muscles, and the intellect. Each of these predominates in different kinds of exercise. In walking, the will and muscles are so accustomed to work together and perform their task with so little expenditure of force, that the intellect is left comparatively free. The mental pleasure in walking, as such, is in the sense of power over all our moving machinery. But in riding, I have the additional pleasure of governing another will, and my muscles extend to the tips of the animal's ears and to his four hoofs, instead of stopping at my hands and feet. Now in this extension of my volition and my physical frame into another animal, my tyrannical instincts and

my desire for heroic strength are at once gratified. When the horse ceases to have a will of his own and his muscles require no special attention on your part, then you may live on horseback as Wesley did, and write sermons or take naps, as you like. But you will observe, that, in riding on horseback you always have a feeling, that, after all, it is not you that do the work, but the animal, and this prevents the satisfaction from being complete.

Now let us look at the conditions of rowing. I won't suppose you to be disgracing yourself in one of those miserable tubs, tugging in which is to rowing the true boat what riding a cow is to bestriding an Arab. You know the Esquimaux *kayak* (if that is the name of it), don't you? Look at that model of one over my door. Sharp, rather? — On the contrary, it is a lubber to the one you and I must have: a Dutch fish-wife to Psyche, contrasted with what I will tell you about. — Our boat, then, is something of the shape of a pickerel, as you look down upon his back, he lying in the sunshine just where the sharp edge of the water cuts in among the lily-pads. It is a kind of giant *pod*, as one may say, — tight everywhere,

except in a little place in the middle, where you sit. Its length is from seven to ten yards, and as it is only from sixteen to thirty inches wide in its widest part, you understand why you want those "outriggers," or projecting iron frames with the rowlocks in which the oars play. My rowlocks are five feet apart; double the greatest width of the boat.

Here you are, then, afloat with a body a rod and a half long, with arms, or wings, as you may choose to call them, stretching more than twenty feet from tip to tip; every volition of yours extending as perfectly into them as if your spinal cord ran down the centre strip of your boat, and the nerves of your arms tingled as far as the broad blades of your oars, — oars of spruce, balanced, leathered and ringed under your own special direction. This, in sober earnest, is the nearest approach to flying that man has ever made or perhaps ever will make.[1] As the hawk sails without flapping his pinions, so you drift with the tide when

[1] Since the days when this was written the bicycle has appeared as the rival of the wherry. I have witnessed three appearances of the pedal locomotive. The first was when I was a boy. (The machine was introduced into Great Britain from France about 1820.) Some of

you will, in the most luxurious form of locomotion indulged to an embodied spirit. But if your blood wants rousing, turn round that stake in the river, which you see a mile from here; and when you come in in sixteen minutes (if you do, for we are old boys, and not champion scullers, you remember), then say if you begin to feel a little warmed up or not! You can row easily and gently all day, and you can row

the Harvard College students who boarded in my neighborhood had these machines, then called velocipedes, on which they used to waddle along like so many ducks, their feet pushing against the ground, and looking as if they were perched on portable treadmills. They soon found that legs were made before velocipedes. Our grown-up young people may remember the second advent of the contrivance, now become a treadle-locomotive. There were "rinks" where this form of roller-skating had a brief run, and then legs again asserted their prior claim and greater convenience. At the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, in 1876, I first saw the modern bicycles, some of them at least, from Coventry, England. Since that time the bicycle glides in and out everywhere, noiseless as a serpent,

> And [wheels] rush in where [horses] fear to tread.

The boat flies like a sea-bird with its long, narrow, outstretched pinions; the bicycle rider, like feathered Mercury, with his wings on his feet. There seems to be nothing left to perfect in the way of human locomotion but aerial swimming, which some fancy is to be a conquest of the future.

yourself blind and black in the face in ten minutes, just as you like. It has been long agreed that there is no way in which a man can accomplish so much labor with his muscles as in rowing. It is in the boat, then, that man finds the largest extension of his volitional and muscular existence; and yet he may tax both of them so slightly, in that most delicious of exercises, that he shall mentally write his sermon, or his poem, or recall the remarks he has made in company and put them in form for the public, as well as in his easy-chair.

I dare not publicly name the rare joys, the infinite delights, that intoxicate me on some sweet June morning, when the river and bay are smooth as a sheet of beryl-green silk, and I run along ripping it up with my knife-edged shell of a boat, the rent closing after me like those wounds of angels which Milton tells of, but the seam still shining for many a long rood behind me. To lie still over the Flats, where the waters are shallow, and see the crabs crawling and the sculpins gliding busily and silently beneath the boat, — to rustle in through the long harsh grass that leads up some tranquil creek, — to take shelter from the sunbeams under

one of the thousand-footed bridges, and look down its interminable colonnades, crusted with green and oozy growths, studded with minute barnacles, and belted with rings of dark muscles, while overhead streams and thunders that other river whose every wave is a human soul flowing to eternity as the river below flows to the ocean, — lying there moored unseen, in loneliness so profound that the columns of Tadmor in the Desert could not seem more remote from life — the cool breeze on one's forehead, the stream whispering against the half-sunken pillars, — why should I tell of these things, that I should live to see my beloved haunts invaded and the waves blackened with boats as with a swarm of water-beetles? What a city of idiots we must be not to have covered this glorious bay with gondolas and wherries, as we have just learned to cover the ice in winter with skaters!

I am satisfied that such a set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, paste-complexioned youth as we can boast in our Atlantic cities never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage. Of the females that are the mates of these males I do not here speak. I preached my sermon from



the lay-pulpit on this matter a good while ago. Of course, if you heard it, you know my belief is that the total climatic influences here are getting up a number of new patterns of humanity, some of which are not an improvement on the old model. Clipper-built, sharp in the bows, long in the spars, slender to look at, and fast to go, the ship, which is the great organ of our national life of relation, is but a reproduction of the typical form which the elements impress upon its builder. All this we cannot help; but we can make the best of these influences, such as they are. We have a few good boatmen, — no good horsemen that I hear of, — I cannot speak for cricketing, — but as for any great athletic feat performed by a gentleman in these latitudes, society would drop a man who should run round the Common in five minutes. Some of our amateur fencers, single-stick players, and boxers, we have no reason to be ashamed of. Boxing is rough play, but not too rough for a hearty young fellow. Anything is better than this white-blooded degeneration to which we all tend.

I dropped in at a gentleman's sparring exhibition only last evening. It did my

heart good to see that there were a few young and youngish youths left who could take care of their own heads in case of emergency. It is a fine sight, that of a gentleman resolving himself into the primitive constituents of his humanity. Here is a delicate young man now, with an intellectual countenance, a slight figure, a subpallid complexion, a most unassuming deportment, a mild adolescent in fact, that any Hiram or Jonathan from between the ploughtails would of course expect to handle with perfect ease. Oh, he is taking off his gold-bowed spectacles! Ah, he is divesting himself of his cravat! Why, he is stripping off his coat! Well, here he is, sure enough, in a tight silk shirt, and with two things that look like batter puddings in the place of his fists. Now see that other fellow with another pair of batter puddings, — the big one with the broad shoulders; he will certainly knock the little man's head off, if he strikes him. Feinting, dodging, stopping, hitting, countering, — little man's head not off yet. You might as well try to jump upon your own shadow as to hit the little man's intellectual features. He need n't have taken off the gold-bowed spectacles at all. Quick, cau-

tious, shifty, nimble, cool, he catches all the fierce lunges or gets out of their reach, till his turn comes, and then, whack goes one of the batter puddings against the big one's ribs, and bang goes the other into the big one's face, and, staggering, shuffling, slipping, tripping, collapsing, sprawling, down goes the big one in a miscellaneous bundle. — If my young friend, whose excellent article I have referred to, could only introduce the manly art of self-defence among the clergy, I am satisfied that we should have better sermons and an infinitely less quarrelsome church-militant. A bout with the gloves would let off the ill-nature, and cure the indigestion, which, united, have embroiled their subject in a bitter controversy. We should then often hear that a point of difference between an infallible and a heretic, instead of being vehemently discussed in a series of newspaper articles, had been settled by a friendly contest in several rounds, at the close of which the parties shook hands and appeared cordially reconciled.

But boxing you and I are too old for, I am afraid. I was for a moment tempted, by the contagion of muscular electricity last evening, to try the gloves with the Benicia

Boy, who looked in as a friend to the noble art; but remembering that he had twice my weight and half my age, besides the advantage of his training, I sat still and said nothing.

There is one other delicate point I wish to speak of with reference to old age. I refer to the use of dioptric media which correct the diminished refracting power of the humors of the eye, — in other words, spectacles. I don't use them. All I ask is a large, fair type, a strong daylight or gaslight, and one yard of focal distance, and my eyes are as good as ever. But if *your* eyes fail, I can tell you something encouraging. There is now living in New York State an old gentleman who, perceiving his sight to fail, immediately took to exercising it on the finest print, and in this way fairly bullied Nature out of her foolish habit of taking liberties at five-and-forty, or thereabout. And now this old gentleman performs the most extraordinary feats with his pen, showing that his eyes must be a pair of microscopes. I should be afraid to say to you how much he writes in the compass of a half-dime, — whether the Psalms or the Gospels, or the Psalms *and* the Gospels, I won't be positive.

But now let me tell you this. If the time comes when you must lay down the fiddle and the bow, because your fingers are too stiff, and drop the ten-foot sculls, because your arms are too weak, and, after dallying a while with eye-glasses, come at last to the undisguised reality of spectacles, — if the time comes when that fire of life we spoke of has burned so low that where its flames reverberated there is only the sombre stain of regret, and where its coals glowed, only the white ashes that cover the embers of memory, — don't let your heart grow cold, and you may carry cheerfulness and love with you into the teens of your second century, if you can last so long. As our friend, the Poet, once said, in some of those old-fashioned heroics of his which he keeps for his private reading, —

Call him not old, whose visionary brain
Holds o'er the past its undivided reign.
For him in vain the envious seasons roll
Who bears eternal summer in his soul.
If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,
Spring with her birds, or children with their play,
Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art
Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart, —
Turn to the record where his years are told, —
Count his gray hairs, — they cannot make him old!

End of the Professor's paper.

[The above essay was not read at one time, but in several instalments, and accompanied by various comments from different persons at the table. The company were in the main attentive, with the exception of a little somnolence on the part of the old gentleman opposite at times, and a few sly, malicious questions about the "old boys" on the part of that forward young fellow who has figured occasionally, not always to his advantage, in these reports.

On Sunday mornings, in obedience to a feeling I am not ashamed of, I have always tried to give a more appropriate character to our conversation. I have never read them my sermon yet, and I don't know that I shall, as some of them might take my convictions as a personal indignity to themselves. But having read our company so much of the Professor's talk about age and other subjects connected with physical life, I took the next Sunday morning to repeat to them the following poem of his, which I have had by me some time. He calls it — I suppose for his professional friends — The Anatomist's Hymn; but I shall name it —]



Not in the world of light alone,
Where God has built his blazing throne,
Nor yet alone in earth below,
With belted seas that come and go,
And endless isles of sunlit green,
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:
Look in upon thy wondrous frame, —
Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,
Whose streams of brightening purple rush
Fired with a new and livelier blush,
While all their burden of decay
The ebbing current steals away,
And red with Nature's flame they start
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,
Forever quivering o'er his task,
While far and wide a crimson jet
Leaps forth to fill the woven net
Which in unnumbered crossing tides
The flood of burning life divides,
Then kindling each decaying part
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame
Behold the outward moving frame,
Its living marbles jointed strong
With glistening band and silvery thong,
And linked to reason's guiding reins
By myriad rings in trembling chains,
Each graven with the threaded zone
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white
Is braided out of seven-hued light,
Yet in those lucid globes no ray
By any chance shall break astray.
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,
Arches and spirals circling round,
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear
With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds
All thought in its mysterious folds,
That feels sensation's faintest thrill
And flashes forth the sovereign will;
Think on the stormy world that dwells
Locked in its dim and clustering cells!
The lightning gleams of power it sheds
Along its slender glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine
To make these mystic temples thine!
When wasting age and wearying strife
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,
When darkness gathers over all,
And the last tottering pillars fall,
Take the poor dust thy mercy warms
And mould it into heavenly forms.



VIII

SPRING has come. You will find some verses to that effect at the end of these notes. If you are an impatient reader, skip to them at once. In reading aloud, omit, if you please, the sixth and seventh verses. These are parenthetical and digressive, and, unless your audience is of superior intelligence, will confuse them. Many people can ride on horseback who find it hard to get on and to get off without assistance. One has to dismount from an idea, and get into the saddle again, at every parenthesis.]

—The old gentleman who sits opposite, finding that spring had fairly come, mounted a white hat one day, and walked into the street. It seems to have been a premature or otherwise exceptionable exhibition, not unlike that commemorated by the late Mr. Bayley. When the old gentleman came home, he looked very red in the face, and com-

plained that he had been "made sport of." By sympathizing questions, I learned from him that a boy had called him "old daddy," and asked him when he had his hat white-washed.

This incident led me to make some observations at table the next morning, which I here repeat for the benefit of the readers of this record.

— The hat is the vulnerable point of the artificial integument. I learned this in early boyhood. I was once equipped in a hat of Leghorn straw, having a brim of much wider dimensions than were usual at that time, and sent to school in that portion of my native town which lies nearest to this metropolis. On my way I was met by a "Port-chuck," as we used to call the young gentlemen of that locality, and the following dialogue ensued.

The Port-chuck. Hullo, You-sir, joo know th' wuz gōn-to be a race to-morrah?

Myself. No. Who 's gōn-to run, 'n' wher 's 't gōn-to be?

The Port-chuck. Squire Mycall 'n' Doctor Williams, round the brim o' your hat.

These two much-respected gentlemen being the oldest inhabitants at that time, and

the alleged race-course being out of the question, the Port-chuck also winking and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, I perceived that I had been trifled with, and the effect has been to make me sensitive and observant respecting this article of dress ever since. Here is an axiom or two relating to it.

A hat which has been *popped*, or exploded by being sat down upon, is never itself again afterwards.

It is a favorite illusion of sanguine natures to believe the contrary.

Shabby gentility has nothing so characteristic as its hat. There is always an unnatural calmness about its nap, and an unwholesome gloss, suggestive of a wet brush.

The last effort of decayed fortune is expended in smoothing its dilapidated castor. The hat is the *ultimum moriens* of "respectability."

— The old gentleman took all these remarks and maxims very pleasantly, saying, however, that he had forgotten most of his French except the word for potatoes, — *pummies de tare*. — *Ultimum moriens*. I told him, is old Italian, and signifies *last thing to die*. With this explanation he was

well contented, and looked quite calm when I saw him afterwards in the entry with a black hat on his head and the white one in his hand.

— I think myself fortunate in having the Poet and the Professor for my intimates. We are so much together, that we no doubt think and talk a good deal alike; yet our points of view are in many respects individual and peculiar. You know me well enough by this time. I have not talked with you so long for nothing, and therefore I don't think it necessary to draw my own portrait. But let me say a word or two about my friends.

The Professor considers himself, and I consider him, a very useful and worthy kind of drudge. I think he has a pride in his small technicalities. I know that he has a great idea of fidelity; and though I suspect he laughs a little inwardly at times, at the grand airs "Science" puts on, as she stands marking time, but not getting on, while the trumpets are blowing and the big drums beating, — yet I am sure he has a liking for his specialty, and a respect for its cultivators.

But I 'll tell you what the Professor said to the Poet the other day. — My boy, said

he, I can work a great deal cheaper than you, because I keep all my goods in the lower story. You have to hoist yours into the upper chambers of the brain, and let them down again to your customers. I take mine in at the level of the ground, and send them off from my door-step almost without lifting. I tell you, the higher a man has to carry the raw material of thought before he works it up, the more it costs him in blood, nerve, and muscle. Coleridge knew all this very well when he advised every literary man to have a profession.

— Sometimes I like to talk with one of them, and sometimes with the other. After a while I get tired of both. When a fit of intellectual disgust comes over me, I will tell you what I have found admirable as a diversion, in addition to boating and other amusements which I have spoken of, — that is, working at my carpenter's-bench. Some mechanical employment is the greatest possible relief, after the purely intellectual faculties begin to tire. When I was quarantined once at Marseilles, I got to work immediately at carving a wooden wonder of loose rings on a stick, and got so interested in it, that, when we were let out, I "regained

my freedom with a sigh," because my toy was unfinished.

There are long seasons when I talk only with the Professor, and others when I give myself wholly up to the Poet. Now that my winter's work is over and spring is with us, I feel naturally drawn to the Poet's company. I don't know anybody more alive to life than he is. The passion of poetry seizes on him every spring, he says, — yet oftentimes he complains, that when he feels most, he can sing least.

Then a fit of despondency comes over him. — I feel ashamed sometimes, — said he, the other day, — to think how far my worst songs fall below my best. It sometimes seems to me, as I know it does to others who have told me so, that they ought to be *all best*, — if not in actual execution, at least in plan and motive. I am grateful — he continued — for all such criticisms. A man is always pleased to have his most serious efforts praised, and the highest aspect of his nature get the most sunshine.

Yet I am sure, that, in the nature of things, many minds must change their key now and then, on penalty of getting out of tune or losing their voices. You know, I

suppose, — he said. — what is meant by complementary colors? You know the effect, too, which the prolonged impression of any one color has on the retina. If you close your eyes after looking steadily at a *red* object, you see a *green* image.

It is so with many minds. — I will not say with all. After looking at one aspect of external nature, or of any form of beauty or truth, when they turn away, the *complementary* aspect of the same object stamps itself irresistibly and automatically upon the mind. Shall they give expression to this secondary mental state, or not?

When I contemplate — said my friend, the Poet — the infinite largeness of comprehension belonging to the Central Intelligence, how remote the creative conception is from all scholastic and ethical formulæ, I am led to think that a healthy mind ought to change its mood from time to time, and come down from its noblest condition, — never, of course, to degrade itself by dwelling upon what is itself debasing, but to let its lower faculties have a chance to air and exercise themselves. After the first and second floor have been out in the bright street dressed in all their splendors, shall not our humble friends in

the basement have their holiday, and the cotton velvet and the thin-skinned jewelry — simple adornments, but befitting the station of those who wear them — show themselves to the crowd, who think them beautiful, as they ought to, though the people up-stairs know that they are cheap and perishable?

— I don't know that I may not bring the Poet here, some day or other, and let him speak for himself. Still I think I can tell you what he says quite as well as he could do it. — Oh, — he said to me, one day, — I am but a hand-organ man, — say rather, a hand-organ. Life turns the winch, and fancy or accident pulls out the stops. I come under your windows, some fine spring morning, and play you one of my *adagio* movements, and some of you say, — This is good, — play us so always. But, dear friends, if I did not change the stop sometimes, the machine would wear out in one part and rust in another. How easily this or that tune flows! — you say, — there must be no end of just such melodies in him. — I will open the poor machine for you one moment, and you shall look. — Ah! Every note marks where a spur of steel has been driven in. It is easy to grind out the song, but to

plant these bristling points which make it was the painful task of time.

I don't like to say it, — he continued, — but poets commonly have no larger stock of tunes than hand-organs; and when you hear them piping up under your window, you know pretty well what to expect. The more stops, the better. Do let them all be pulled out in their turn!

So spoke my friend, the Poet, and read me one of his stateliest songs, and after it a gay *chanson*, and then a string of epigrams. All true, — he said, — all flowers of his soul; only one with the corolla spread, and another with its disk half opened, and the third with the heart-leaves covered up and only a petal or two showing its tip through the calyx. The water-lily is the type of the poet's soul, — he told me.

— What do you think, Sir, — said the divinity-student, — opens the souls of poets most fully?

Why, there must be the internal force and the external stimulus. Neither is enough by itself. A rose will not flower in the dark, and a fern will not flower anywhere.

What do I think is the true sunshine that opens the poet's corolla? — I don't like to

say. They spoil a good many, I am afraid; or at least they shine on a good many that never come to anything.

Who are *they?* — said the schoolmistress.

Women. Their love first inspires the poet, and their praise is his best reward.

The schoolmistress reddened a little, but looked pleased. — Did I really think so? — I do think so; I never feel safe until I have pleased them; I don't think they are the first to see one's defects, but they are the first to catch the color and fragrance of a true poem. Fit the same intellect to a man and it is a bow-string, — to a woman and it is a harp-string. She is vibratile and resonant all over, so she stirs with slighter musical tremblings of the air about her. — Ah, me! — said my friend, the Poet, to me, the other day, — what color would it not have given to my thoughts, and what thrice-washed whiteness to my words, had I been fed on women's praises! I should have grown like Marvell's fawn, —

"Lilies without; roses within!"

But then, — he added, — we all think, *if* so and so, we should have been this or that, as you were saying the other day, in those rhymes of yours.

— I don't think there are many poets in the sense of creators; but of those sensitive natures which reflect themselves naturally in soft and melodious words, pleading for sympathy with their joys and sorrows, every literature is full. Nature carves with her own hands the brain which holds the creative imagination, but she casts the over-sensitive creatures in scores from the same mould.

There are two kinds of poets, just as there are two kinds of blondes. [Movement of curiosity among our ladies at table. — Please to tell us about those blondes, said the schoolmistress.] Why, there are blondes who are such simply by deficiency of coloring matter, — *negative* or *washed* blondes, arrested by Nature on the way to become albinesses. There are others that are shot through with golden light, with tawny or fulvous tinges in various degree,— *positive* or *stained* blondes, dipped in yellow sunbeams, and as unlike in their mode of being to the others as an orange is unlike a snowball. The albino-style carries with it a wide pupil and a sensitive retina. The other, or the leonine blonde, has an opaline fire in her clear eye, which the brunette can hardly match with her quick glittering glances.

Just so we have the great sun-kindled, constructive imaginations, and a far more numerous class of poets who have a certain kind of moonlight-genius given them to compensate for their imperfection of nature. Their want of mental coloring-matter makes them sensitive to those impressions which stronger minds neglect or never feel at all. Many of them die young, and all of them are tinged with melancholy. There is no more beautiful illustration of the principle of compensation which marks the Divine benevolence than the fact that some of the holiest lives and some of the sweetest songs are the growth of the infirmity which unfits its subject for the rougher duties of life. When one reads the life of Cowper, or of Keats, or of Lucretia and Margaret Davidson, — of so many gentle, sweet natures, born to weakness, and mostly dying before their time, — one cannot help thinking that the human race dies out singing, like the swan in the old story. The French poet, Gilbert, who died at the Hôtel Dieu, at the age of twenty-nine, — (killed by a key in his throat, which he had swallowed when delirious in consequence of a fall), — this poor fellow was a very good example of the poet by excess of

sensibility. I found, the other day, that some of my literary friends had never heard of him, though I suppose few educated Frenchmen do not know the lines which he wrote, a week before his death, upon a mean bed in the great hospital of Paris.

"Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive
J'apparus un jour, et je meurs ;
Je meurs, et sur ma tombe, où lentement j'arrive
Nul ne viendra verser des pleurs."

At life's gay banquet placed, a poor unhappy guest,
One day I pass, then disappear ;
I die, and on the tomb where I at length shall rest
No friend shall come to shed a tear.

You remember the same thing in other words somewhere in Kirke White's poems. It is the burden of the plaintive songs of all these sweet albino-poets. "I shall die and be forgotten, and the world will go on just as if I had never been ; — and yet how I have loved ! how I have longed ! how I have aspired ! " And so singing, their eyes grow brighter and brighter, and their features thinner and thinner, until at last the veil of flesh is threadbare, and, still singing, they drop it and pass onward.

— Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for

all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection.

Tic-tac! tic-tac! go the wheels of thought; our will cannot stop them; they cannot stop themselves; sleep cannot still them; madness only makes them go faster; death alone can break into the case, and, seizing the ever swinging pendulum, which we call the heart, silence at last the clicking of the terrible escapement we have carried so long beneath our wrinkled foreheads.

If we could only get at them, as we lie on our pillows and count the dead beats of thought after thought and image after image jarring through the overtired organ! Will nobody block those wheels, uncouple that pinion, cut the string that holds those weights, blow up the infernal machine with gunpowder? What a passion comes over us sometimes for silence and rest! — that this dreadful mechanism, unwinding the endless tapestry of time, embroidered with spectral figures of life and death, could have but one brief holiday! Who can wonder that men swing themselves off from beams in hempen lassos? — that they jump off from parapets into the swift and gurgling



waters beneath? — that they take counsel of the grim friend who has but to utter his one peremptory monosyllable and the restless machine is shivered as a vase that is dashed upon a marble floor? Under that building which we pass every day there are strong dungeons, where neither hook, nor bar, nor bed-cord, nor drinking-vessel from which a sharp fragment may be shattered, shall by any chance be seen. There is nothing for it, when the brain is on fire with the whirling of its wheels, but to spring against the stone wall and silence them with one crash. Ah, they remembered that, — the kind city fathers, — and the walls are nicely padded, so that one can take such exercise as he likes without damaging himself on the very plain and serviceable upholstery. If anybody would only contrive some kind of a lever that one could thrust in among the works of this horrid automaton and check them, or alter their rate of going, what would the world give for the discovery?

— From half a dime to a dime, according to the style of the place and the quality of the liquor, — said the young fellow whom they call John.

You speak trivially, but not unwisely, —

I said. Unless the will maintain a certain control over these movements, which it cannot stop, but can to some extent regulate, men are very apt to try to get at the machine by some indirect system of leverage or other. They clap on the brakes by means of opium; they change the maddening monotony of the rhythm by means of fermented liquors. It is because the brain is locked up and we cannot touch its movement directly, that we thrust these coarse tools in through any crevice, by which they may reach the interior, and so alter its rate of going for a while, and at last spoil the machine.

Men who exercise chiefly those faculties of the mind which work independently of the will, — poets and artists, for instance, who follow their imagination in their creative moments, instead of keeping it in hand as your logicians and practical men do with their reasoning faculty, — such men are too apt to call in the mechanical appliances to help them govern their intellects.

— He means they get drunk, — said the young fellow already alluded to by name.

Do you think men of true genius are apt to indulge in the use of inebriating fluids? — said the divinity-student.

If you think you are strong enough to bear what I am going to say, — I replied, — I will talk to you about this. But mind, now, these are the things that some foolish people call *dangerous* subjects, — as if these vices which burrow into people's souls, as the Guinea-worm burrows into the naked feet of West-Indian slaves, would be more mischievous when seen than out of sight. Now the true way to deal with those obstinate animals, which are a dozen feet long, some of them, and no bigger than a horse hair, is to get a piece of silk round their *heads*, and pull them out very cautiously. If you only break them off, they grow worse than ever, and sometimes kill the person who has the misfortune to harbor one of them. Whence it is plain that the first thing to do is to find out where the head lies.

Just so of all the vices, and particularly of this vice of intemperance. What is the head of it, and where does it lie? For you may depend upon it, there is not one of these vices that has not a head of its own, — an intelligence, — a meaning, — a certain virtue, I was going to say, — but that might, perhaps, sound paradoxical. I have heard

an immense number of moral physicians lay down the treatment of moral Guinea-worms, and the vast majority of them would always insist that the creature had no head at all, but was all body and tail. So I have found a very common result of their method to be that the string slipped, or that a piece only of the creature was broken off, and the worm soon grew again, as bad as ever. The truth is, if the Devil could only appear in church by attorney, and make the best statement that the facts would bear him out in doing on behalf of his special virtues (what we commonly call vices), the influence of good teachers would be much greater than it is. For the arguments by which the Devil prevails are precisely the ones that the Devil-queller most rarely answers. The way to argue down a vice is not to tell lies about it, — to say that it has no attractions, when everybody knows that it has, — but rather to let it make out its case just as it certainly will in the moment of temptation, and then meet it with the weapons furnished by the Divine armory. Ithuriel did not spit the toad on his spear, you remember, but touched him with it, and the blasted angel took the sad glories of his true shape. If

he had shown fight then, the fair spirits would have known how to deal with him.

That all spasmodic cerebral action is an evil is not perfectly clear. Men get fairly intoxicated with music, with poetry, with religious excitement, — oftenest with love. Ninon de l'Enclos said she was so easily excited that her soup intoxicated her, and convalescents have been made tipsy by a beefsteak.

There are forms and stages of alcoholic exaltation which, in themselves, and without regard to their consequences, might be considered as positive improvements of the persons affected. When the sluggish intellect is roused, the slow speech quickened, the cold nature warmed, the latent sympathy developed, the flagging spirit kindled, — before the trains of thought become confused, or the will perverted, or the muscles relaxed, — just at the moment when the whole human zoöphyte flowers out like a full-blown rose, and is ripe for the subscription-paper or the contribution-box, — it would be hard to say that a man was, at that very time, worse, or less to be loved, than when driving a hard bargain with all his meaner wits about him. The difficulty is, that the alcoholic virtues don't wash; but until the water

takes their colors out, the tints are very much like those of the true celestial stuff.

[Here I was interrupted by a question which I am very unwilling to report, but have confidence enough in those friends who examine these records to commit to their candor.

A *person* at table asked me whether I "went in for rum as a steady drink?"— His manner made the question highly offensive, but I restrained myself, and answered thus: —]

Rum I take to be the name which unwashed moralists apply alike to the product distilled from molasses and the noblest juices of the vineyard. Burgundy in "all its sunset glow" is rum. Champagne, soul of "the foaming grape of Eastern France," is rum. Hock, which our friend, the Poet, speaks of as

> "The Rhine's breastmilk, gushing cold and bright
> Pale as the moon, and maddening as her light,"

is rum. Sir, I repudiate the loathsome vulgarism as an insult to the first miracle wrought by the Founder of our religion! I address myself to the company. — I believe in temperance, nay, almost in abstinence, as

a rule for healthy people. I trust that I practise both. But let me tell you, there are companies of men of genius into which I sometimes go, where the atmosphere of intellect and sentiment is so much more stimulating than alcohol, that, if I thought fit to take wine, it would be to keep me sober.

Among the gentlemen that I have known, few, if any, were ruined by drinking. My few drunken acquaintances were generally ruined before they became drunkards. The habit of drinking is often a vice, no doubt, — sometimes a misfortune, — as when an almost irresistible hereditary propensity exists to indulge in it, — but oftenest of all a *punishment.*

Empty heads, — heads without ideas in wholesome variety and sufficient number to furnish food for the mental clock-work, — ill-regulated heads, where the faculties are not under the control of the will, — these are the ones that hold the brains which their owners are so apt to tamper with, by introducing the appliances we have been talking about. Now, when a gentleman's brain is empty or ill-regulated, it is, to a great extent, his own fault; and so it is simple retribution, that, while he lies slothfully sleeping

or aimlessly dreaming, the fatal habit settles on him like a vampire, and sucks his blood, fanning him all the while with its hot wings into deeper slumber or idler dreams! I am not such a hard-souled being as to apply this to the neglected poor, who have had no chance to fill their heads with wholesome ideas, and to be taught the lesson of self-government. I trust the tariff of Heaven has an *ad valorem* scale for them, — and all of us.

But to come back to poets and artists; — if they really are more prone to the abuse of stimulants, — and I fear that this is true, — the reason of it is only too clear. A man abandons himself to a fine frenzy, and the power which flows through him, as I once explained to you, makes him the medium of a great poem or a great picture. The creative action is not voluntary at all, but automatic: we can only put the mind into the proper attitude, and wait for the wind, that blows where it listeth, to breathe over it. Thus the true state of creative genius is allied to *reverie*, or dreaming. If mind and body were both healthy and had food enough and fair play, I doubt whether any men would be more temperate than the imagina-

tive classes. But body and mind often flag, — perhaps they are ill-made to begin with, underfed with bread or ideas, overworked, or abused in some way. The automatic action, by which genius wrought its wonders, fails. There is only one thing which can rouse the machine ; not will, — that cannot reach it, nothing but a ruinous agent, which hurries the wheels a while and soon eats out the heart of the mechanism. The dreaming faculties are always the dangerous ones, because their mode of action can be imitated by artificial excitement ; the reasoning ones are safe, because they imply continued voluntary effort.

I think you will find it true, that, before any vice can fasten on a man, body, mind, or moral nature must be debilitated. The mosses and fungi gather on sickly trees, not thriving ones ; and the odious parasites which fasten on the human frame choose that which is already enfeebled. Mr. Walker, the hygeian humorist, declared that he had such a healthy skin it was impossible for any impurity to stick to it, and maintained that it was an absurdity to wash a face which was of necessity always clean. I don't know how much fancy there was in this ; but

there is no fancy in saying that the lassitude of tired-out operatives, and the languor of imaginative natures in their periods of collapse, and the vacuity of minds untrained to labor and discipline, fit the soul and body for the germination of the seeds of intemperance.

Whenever the wandering demon of Drunkenness finds a ship adrift, — no steady wind in its sails, no thoughtful pilot directing its course, — he steps on board, takes the helm, and steers straight for the maelstrom.

— I wonder if you know the *terrible smile?* [The young fellow whom they call John winked very hard, and made a jocular remark, the sense of which seemed to depend on some double meaning of the word *smile.* The company was curious to know what I meant.]

There are persons — I said — who no sooner come within sight of you than they begin to smile, with an uncertain movement of the mouth, which conveys the idea that they are thinking about themselves, and thinking, too, that you are thinking they are thinking about themselves, — and so look at you with a wretched mixture of self-

consciousness, awkwardness, and attempts to carry off both, which are betrayed by the cowardly behavior of the eye and the tell-tale weakness of the lips that characterize these unfortunate beings.

— Why do you call them unfortunate, Sir? — asked the divinity-student.

Because it is evident that the consciousness of some imbecility or other is at the bottom of this extraordinary expression. I don't think, however, that these persons are commonly fools. I have known a number, and all of them were intelligent. I think nothing conveys the idea of *underbreeding* more than this self-betraying smile. Yet I think this peculiar habit as well as that of *meaningless blushing* may be fallen into by very good people who meet often, or sit opposite each other at table. A true gentleman's face is infinitely removed from all such paltriness, — calm-eyed, firm-mouthed. I think Titian understood the look of a gentleman as well as anybody that ever lived. The portrait of a young man holding a glove in his hand, in the Gallery of the Louvre, if any of you have seen that collection, will remind you of what I mean.

— Do I think these people know the

peculiar look they have? — I cannot say; I hope not; I am afraid they would never forgive me, if they did. The worst of it is, the trick is catching; when one meets one of these fellows, he feels a tendency to the same manifestation. The Professor tells me there is a muscular slip, a dependence of the *platysma myoides*, which is called the *risorius Santorini*.

— Say that once more, — exclaimed the young fellow mentioned above.

The Professor says there is a little fleshy slip called Santorini's laughing muscle. I would have it cut out of my face, if I were born with one of those constitutional grins upon it. Perhaps I am uncharitable in my judgment of those sour-looking people I told you of the other day, and of these smiling folks. It may be that they are born with these looks, as other people are with more generally recognized deformities. Both are bad enough, but I had rather meet three of the scowlers than one of the smilers.

— There is another unfortunate way of looking, which is peculiar to that amiable sex we do not like to find fault with. There are some very pretty, but, unhappily, very ill-bred women, who don't understand the

law of the road with regard to handsome faces. Nature and custom would, no doubt, agree in conceding to all males the right of at least two distinct looks at every comely female countenance, without any infraction of the rules of courtesy or the sentiment of respect. The first look is necessary to define the person of the individual one meets so as to recognize an acquaintance. Any unusual attraction detected in a first glance is a sufficient apology for a second, — not a prolonged and impertinent stare, but an appreciating homage of the eyes, such as a stranger may inoffensively yield to a passing image. It is astonishing how morbidly sensitive some vulgar beauties are to the slightest demonstration of this kind. When a *lady* walks the streets, she leaves her virtuous-indignation countenance at home ; she knows well enough that the street is a picture-gallery, where pretty faces framed in pretty bonnets are meant to be seen, and everybody has a right to see them.

— When we observe how the same features and style of person and character descend from generation to generation, we can believe that some inherited weakness may account for these peculiarities. Little snap-

ping-turtles snap — so the great naturalist tells us — before they are fairly out of the egg-shell. I am satisfied, that, much higher up in the scale of life, character is distinctly shown at the age of — 2 or — 3 months.

— My friend, the Professor, has been full of eggs lately. [This remark excited a burst of hilarity which I did not allow to interrupt the course of my observations.] He has been reading the great book where he found the fact about the little snapping-turtles mentioned above. Some of the things he has told me have suggested several odd analogies enough.

There are half a dozen men, or so, who carry in their brains the *ovarian eggs* of the next generation's or century's civilization. These eggs are not ready to be laid in the form of books as yet; some of them are hardly ready to be put into the form of talk. But as rudimentary ideas or inchoate tendencies, there they are; and these are what must form the future. A man's general notions are not good for much, unless he has a crop of these intellectual ovarian eggs in his own brain, or knows them as they exist in the minds of others. One must be in the *habit* of talking with such persons to get at

these rudimentary germs of thought; for their development is necessarily imperfect, and they are moulded on new patterns, which must be long and closely studied. But these are the men to talk with. No fresh truth ever gets into a book.

— A good many fresh lies get in, anyhow, — said one of the company.

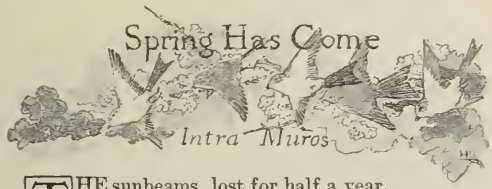
I proceeded in spite of the interruption. — All uttered thought, my friend, the Professor, says, is of the nature of an excretion. Its materials have been taken in, and have acted upon the system, and been reacted on by it; it has circulated and done its office in one mind before it is given out for the benefit of others. It may be milk or venom to other minds; but, in either case, it is something which the producer has had the use of and can part with. A man instinctively tries to get rid of his thought in conversation or in print so soon as it is matured; but it is hard to get at it as it lies imbedded, a mere potentiality, the germ of a germ, in his intellect.

— Where are the brains that are fullest of these ovarian eggs of thought? — I decline mentioning individuals. The producers of thought, who are few, the "jobbers" of

thought, who are many, and the retailers of thought, who are numberless, are so mixed up in the popular apprehension, that it would be hopeless to try to separate them before opinion has had time to settle. Follow the course of opinion on the great subjects of human interest for a few generations or centuries, get its parallax, map out a small arc of its movement, see where it tends, and then see who is in advance of it or even with it; the world calls him hard names, probably; but if you would find the *ova* of the future, you must look into the folds of his cerebral convolutions.

[The divinity-student looked a little puzzled at this suggestion, as if he did not see exactly where he was to come out, if he computed his arc too nicely. I think it possible it might cut off a few corners of his present belief, as it has cut off martyr-burning and witch-hanging; — but time will show, — time will show, as the old gentleman opposite says.]

— Oh, — here is that copy of verses I told you about.



THE sunbeams, lost for half a year,
Slant through my pane their morning rays
For dry Northwesters cold and clear,
The East blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen,
Then close against the sheltering wall
The tulip's horn of dusky green,
The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns;
The long narcissus-blades appear;
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns,
And lights her blue-flamed chandelier.

The willow's whistling lashes, wrung
By the wild winds of gusty March,
With sallow leaflets lightly strung,
Are swaying by the tufted larch.

The elms have robed their slender spray
With full-blown flower and embryo leaf;
Wide o'er the clasping arch of day
Soars like a cloud their hoary chief.

— [See the proud tulip's flaunting cup,
That flames in glory for an hour, —
Behold it withering, — then look up, —
How meek the forest-monarch's flower! —

When wake the violets, Winter dies;
  When sprout the elm-buds, Spring is near;
When lilacs blossom, Summer cries,
  "Bud, little roses! Spring is here!"]

The windows blush with fresh bouquets,
  Cut with the May-dew on their lips;
The raddish all its bloom displays,
  Pink as Aurora's finger-tips.

Nor less the flood of light that showers
  On beauty's changed corolla-shades, —
The walks are gay as bridal bowers
  With rows of many-petalled maids.

The scarlet shell-fish click and clash
  In the blue barrow where they slide,
The horseman, proud of streak and splash,
  Creeps homeward from his morning ride.

Here comes the dealer's awkward string,
  With neck in rope and tail in knot, —
Rough colts, with careless country-swing,
  In lazy walk or slouching trot.

— Wild filly from the mountain-side,
  Doomed to the close and chafing thills,
Lend me thy long, untiring stride
  To seek with thee thy western hills!

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,
  The thrush's trill, the cat-bird's cry,
Like some poor bird with prisoned wing
  That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

Oh for one spot of living green, —
  One little spot where leaves can grow, —
To love unblamed, to walk unseen,
  To dream above, to sleep below!



IX

IF I should ever make a little book out of these papers, which I hope you are not getting tired of, I suppose I ought to save the above sentence for a motto on the title-page. But I want it now, and must use it. I need not say to you that the words are Spanish, nor that they are to be found in the short Introduction to "Gil Blas," nor that they mean, "Here

[*Aquí está encerrada el alma del licenciado Pedro Garcias.*

lies buried the soul of the licentiate Pedro Garcias."

I warned all young people off the premises when I began my notes referring to old age. I must be equally fair with old people now. They are earnestly requested to leave this paper to young persons from the age of twelve to that of four-score years and ten, at which latter period of life I am sure that I shall have at least one youthful reader. You know well enough what I mean by youth and age;— something in the soul, which has no more to do with the color of the hair than the vein of gold in a rock has to do with the grass a thousand feet above it.

I am growing bolder as I write. I think it requires not only youth, but genius, to read this paper. I don't mean to imply that it required any whatsoever to talk what I have here written down. It did demand a certain amount of memory, and such command of the English tongue as is given by a common school education. So much I do claim. But here I have related, at length, a string of trivialities. You must have the imagination of a poet to transfigure them. These little colored patches are stains upon the windows of a human soul; stand on the

outside, they are but dull and meaningless spots of color; seen from within, they are glorified shapes with empurpled wings and sunbright aureoles.

My hand trembles when I offer you this. Many times I have come bearing flowers such as my garden grew; but now I offer you this poor, brown, homely growth, you may cast it away as worthless. And yet, — and yet, — it is something better than flowers; it is a *seed-capsule*. Many a gardener will cut you a bouquet of his choicest blossoms for small fee, but he does not love to let the seeds of his rarest varieties go out of his own hands.

It is by little things that we know ourselves; a soul would very probably mistake itself for another, when once disembodied, were it not for individual experiences which differ from those of others only in details seemingly trifling. All of us have been thirsty thousands of times, and felt, with Pindar, that water was the best of things. I alone, as I think, of all mankind, remember one particular pailful of water, flavored with the white-pine of which the pail was made, and the brown mug out of which one Edmund, a red-faced and curly-haired boy,

was averred to have bitten a fragment in his haste to drink ; it being then high summer, and little full-blooded boys feeling very warm and porous in the low-"studded" school-room where Dame Prentiss, dead and gone, ruled over young children, many of whom are old ghosts now, and have known Abraham for twenty or thirty years of our mortal time.

Thirst belongs to humanity, everywhere, in all ages; but that white-pine pail, and that brown mug belong to me in particular; and just so of my special relationships with other things and with my race. One could never remember himself in eternity by the mere fact of having loved or hated any more than by that of having thirsted; love and hate have no more individuality in them than single waves in the ocean; — but the accidents or trivial marks which distinguished those whom we loved or hated make their memory our own forever, and with it that of our own personality also.

Therefore, my aged friend of five-and-twenty, or thereabouts, pause at the threshold of this particular record, and ask yourself seriously whether you are fit to read such revelations as are to follow. For observe,

you have here no splendid array of petals such as poets offer you, — nothing but a dry shell, containing, if you will get out what is in it, a few small seeds of poems. You may laugh at them, if you like. I shall never tell you what I think of you for so doing. But if you can read into the heart of these things, in the light of other memories as slight yet as dear to your soul, then you are neither more nor less than a POET, and can afford to write no more verses during the rest of your natural life, — which abstinence I take to be one of the surest marks of your meriting the divine name I have just bestowed upon you.

May I beg of you who have begun this paper nobly trusting to your own imagination and sensibilities to give it the significance which it does not lay claim to without your kind assistance, — may I beg of you, I say, to pay particular attention to the *brackets* which inclose certain paragraphs? I want my "asides," you see, to whisper loud to you who read my notes, and sometimes I talk a page or two to you without pretending that I said a word of it to our boarders. You will find a very long "aside" to you almost as soon as you begin to read. And so, dear

young friend, fall to at once, taking such things as I have provided for you ; and if you turn them, by the aid of your powerful imagination, into a fair banquet, why, then, peace be with you, and a summer by the still waters of some quiet river, or by some yellow beach, where, as my friend, the Professor, says, you can sit with Nature's wrist in your hand and count her ocean pulses.]

I should like to make a few intimate revelations relating especially to my early life, if I thought you would like to hear them.

[The schoolmistress turned a little in her chair, and sat with her face directed partly toward me. — Half-mourning now ; — purple ribbon. That breastpin she wears has *gray* hair in it ; her mother's no doubt ; — I remember our landlady's daughter telling me, soon after the schoolmistress came to board with us, that she had lately "buried a payrent." That 's what made her look so pale, — kept the poor dying thing alive with her own blood. Ah ! long illness is the real vampyrism ; think of living a year or two after one is dead, by sucking the life-blood out of a frail young creature at one's bedside ! Well, souls grow white, as well as

cheeks, in these holy duties: one that goes in a nurse may come out an angel. — God bless all good women! — to their soft hands and pitying hearts we must all come at last! —The schoolmistress has a better color than when she came. — Too late! — "It might have been." — Amen!

— How many thoughts go to a dozen heart-beats, sometimes! There was no long pause after my remark addressed to the company, but in that time I had the train of ideas and feelings I have just given flash through my consciousness sudden and sharp as the crooked red streak that springs out of its black sheath like the creese of a Malay in his death-race, and stabs the earth right and left in its blind rage.

I don't deny that there was a pang in it, — yes, a stab; but there was a prayer, too, — the "Amen" belonged to that. — Also, a vision of a four-story brick house, nicely furnished, — I actually saw many specific articles, — curtains, sofas, tables, and others, and could draw the patterns of them at this moment, — a brick house, I say, looking out on the water, with a fair parlor, and books and busts and pots of flowers and bird-cages, all complete; and at the window, looking on

the water, two of us. — "Male and female created He them" — These two were standing at the window, when a smaller shape that was playing near them looked up at me with such a look that I —— —— poured out a glass of water, drank it all down, and then continued.]

I said I should like to tell you some things, such as people commonly never tell, about my early recollections. Should you like to hear them?

Should we *like* to hear them? — said the schoolmistress; — no, but we should *love* to.

[The voice was a sweet one, naturally, and had something very pleasant in its tone, just then. — The four-story brick house, which had gone out like a transparency when the light behind it is quenched, glimmered again for a moment; parlor, books, busts, flower-pots, bird-cages, all complete, — and the figures as before.]

We are waiting with eagerness, Sir, — said the divinity-student.

[The transparency went out as if a flash of black lightning had struck it.]

If you want to hear my confessions, the next thing, — I said, — is to know whether I can trust you with them. It is only fair

to say that there are a great many people in the world who laugh at such things. *I* think they are fools, but perhaps you don't all agree with me.

Here are children of tender age talked to as if they were capable of understanding Calvin's "Institutes," and nobody has honesty or sense enough to tell the plain truth about the little wretches: that they are as superstitious as naked savages, and such miserable spiritual cowards — that is, if they have any imagination — that they will believe anything which is taught them, and a great deal more which they teach themselves.

I was born and bred, as I have told you twenty times, among books and those who knew what was in books. I was carefully instructed in things temporal and spiritual. But up to a considerable maturity of childhood I believed Raphael and Michael Angelo to have been superhuman beings. The central doctrine of the prevalent religious faith of Christendom was utterly confused and neutralized in my mind for years by one of those too common stories of actual life, which I overheard repeated in a whisper. — Why did I not ask? you will say. — You

don't remember the rosy pudency of sensitive children. The first instinctive movement of the little creatures is to make a *cache*, and bury in it beliefs, doubts, dreams, hopes, and terrors. I am uncovering one of these *caches*. Do you think I was necessarily a greater fool and coward than another?

I was afraid of ships. Why, I could never tell. The masts looked frightfully tall, — but they were not so tall as the steeple of our old yellow meeting-house. At any rate, I used to hide my eyes from the sloops and schooners that were wont to lie at the end of the bridge, and I confess that traces of this undefined terror lasted very long. — One other source of alarm had a still more fearful significance. There was a great wooden HAND, — a glove-maker's sign, which used to swing and creak in the blast, as it hung from a pillar before a certain shop a mile or two outside of the city. Oh, the dreadful hand! Always hanging there ready to catch up a little boy, who would come home to supper no more, nor yet to bed, — whose porringer would be laid away empty thenceforth, and his half-worn shoes wait until his small brother grew to fit them.

As for all manner of superstitious observances, I used once to think I must have been peculiar in having such a list of them, but I now believe that half the children of the same age go through the same experiences. No Roman soothsayer ever had such a catalogue of *omens* as I found in the Sibylline leaves of my childhood. That trick of throwing a stone at a tree and attaching some mighty issue to hitting or missing, which you will find mentioned in one or more biographies, I well remember. Stepping on or over certain particular things or spots, — Dr. Johnson's especial weakness, — I got the habit of at a very early age. — I won't swear that I have not some tendency to these not wise practices even at this present date. [How many of you that read these notes can say the same thing!]

With these follies mingled sweet delusions, which I loved so well I would not outgrow them, even when it required a voluntary effort to put a momentary trust in them. Here is one which I cannot help telling you.

The firing of the great guns at the Navy-yard is easily heard at the place where I was born and lived. "There is a ship of

war come in," they used to say, when they heard them. Of course, I supposed that such vessels came in unexpectedly, after indefinite years of absence, — suddenly as falling stones; and that the great guns roared in their astonishment and delight at the sight of the old war-ship splitting the bay with her cutwater. Now, the sloop-of-war the Wasp, Captain Blakely, after gloriously capturing the Reindeer and the Avon, had disappeared from the face of the ocean, and was supposed to be lost. But there was no proof of it, and, of course, for a time, hopes were entertained that she might be heard from. Long after the last real chance had utterly vanished, I pleased myself with the fond illusion that somewhere on the waste of waters she was still floating, and there were *years* during which I never heard the sound of the great guns booming inland from the Navy-yard without saying to myself, "The Wasp has come!" and almost thinking I could see her, as she rolled in, crumpling the water before her, weather-beaten, barnacled, with shattered spars and threadbare canvas, welcomed by the shouts and tears of thousands. This was one of those dreams that I nursed and

never told. Let me make a clean breast of it now, and say, that, so late as to have outgrown childhood, perhaps to have got far on towards manhood, when the roar of the cannon has struck suddenly on my ear, I have started with a thrill of vague expectation and tremulous delight, and the long-unspoken words have articulated themselves in the mind's dumb whisper, *The Wasp has come!*

—Yes, children believe plenty of queer things. I suppose all of you have had the pocket-book fever when you were little?—What do I mean? Why, ripping up old pocket-books in the firm belief that bank-bills to an immense amount were hidden in them.—So, too, you must all remember some splendid unfulfilled promise of somebody or other, which fed you with hopes perhaps for years, and which left a blank in your life which nothing has ever filled up. —O. T. quitted our household carrying with him the passionate regrets of the more youthful members. He was an ingenious youngster; wrote wonderful copies, and carved the two initials given above with great skill on all available surfaces. I thought, by the way, they were all gone;

but the other day I found them on a certain door which I will show you some time. How it surprised me to find them so near the ground! I had thought the boy of no trivial dimensions. Well, O. T., when he went, made a solemn promise to two of us. I was to have a ship, and the other a mar*tin*-house (last syllable pronounced as in the word *tin*). Neither ever came; but, oh, how many and many a time I have stolen to the corner, — the cars pass close by it at this time, — and looked up that long avenue, thinking that he must be coming now, almost sure, as I turned to look northward, that there he would be, trudging toward me, the ship in one hand and the mar*tin*-house in the other!

[You must not suppose that all I am going to say, as well as all I have said, was told to the whole company. The young fellow whom they call John was in the yard, sitting on a barrel and smoking a cheroot, the fumes of which came in, not ungrateful, through the open window. The divinity-student disappeared in the midst of our talk. The poor relation in black bombazine, who looked and moved as if all her articulations were elbow-joints, had gone off to her cham-

ber, after waiting with a look of soul-subduing decorum at the foot of the stairs until one of the male sort had passed her and ascended into the upper regions. This is a famous point of etiquette in our boarding-house; in fact, between ourselves, they make such an awful fuss about it, that I, for one, had a great deal rather have them simple enough not to think of such matters at all. Our landlady's daughter said, the other evening, that she was going to "retire"; whereupon the young fellow called John took up a lamp and insisted on lighting her to the foot of the staircase. Nothing would induce her to pass by him, until the schoolmistress, saying in good plain English that it was her bed-time, walked straight by them both, not seeming to trouble herself about either of them.

I have been led away from what I meant the portion included in these brackets to inform my readers about. I say, then, most of the boarders had left the table about the time when I began telling some of these secrets of mine, — all of them, in fact, but the old gentleman opposite and the schoolmistress. I understand why a young woman should like to hear these simple but

genuine experiences of early life, which are, as I have said, the little brown seeds of what may yet grow to be poems with leaves of azure and gold; but when the old gentleman pushed up his chair nearer to me, and slanted round his best ear, and once, when I was speaking of some trifling, tender reminiscence, drew a long breath, with such a tremor in it that a little more and it would have been a sob, why, then I felt there must be something of nature in them which redeemed their seeming insignificance. Tell me, man or woman with whom I am whispering, have you not a small store of recollections, such as these I am uncovering, buried beneath the dead leaves of many summers, perhaps under the unmelting snows of fast returning winters, — a few such recollections, which, if you should write them all out, would be swept into some careless editor's drawer, and might cost a scanty half hour's lazy reading to his subscribers, — and yet, if Death should cheat you out of them, you would not know yourself in eternity?]

— I made three acquaintances at a very early period of life, my introduction to whom was never forgotten. The first unequivocal

act of wrong that has left its trace in my memory was this: refusing a small favor asked of me, — nothing more than telling what had happened at school one morning. No matter who asked it; but there were circumstances which saddened and awed me. I had no heart to speak; — I faltered some miserable, perhaps petulant excuse, stole away, and the first battle of life was lost. What remorse followed I need not tell. Then and there, to the best of my knowledge, I first consciously took Sin by the hand and turned my back on Duty. Time has led me to look upon my offence more leniently; I do not believe it or any other childish wrong is infinite, as some have pretended, but infinitely finite. Yet, oh if I had but won that battle!

The great Destroyer, whose awful shadow it was that had silenced me, came near me, — but never, so as to be distinctly seen and remembered, during my tender years. There flits dimly before me the image of a little girl, whose name even I have forgotten, a schoolmate, whom we missed one day, and were told that she had died. But what death was I never had any very distinct idea, until one day I climbed the low stone wall of the

old burial-ground and mingled with a group that were looking into a very deep, long, narrow hole, dug down through the green sod, down through the brown loam, down through the yellow gravel, and there at the bottom was an oblong red box, and a still, sharp, white face of a young man seen through an opening at one end of it. When the lid was closed, and the gravel and stones rattled down pell-mell, and the woman in black, who was crying and wringing her hands, went off with the other mourners, and left him, then I felt that I had seen Death, and should never forget him.

One other acquaintance I made at an earlier period of life than the habit of romancers authorizes. — Love, of course. — She was a famous beauty afterwards. — I am satisfied that many children rehearse their parts in the drama of life before they have shed all their milk-teeth. — I think I won't tell the story of the golden blonde. — I suppose everybody has had his childish fancies; but sometimes they are passionate impulses, which anticipate all the tremulous emotions belonging to a later period. Most children remember seeing and adoring an angel before they were a dozen years old.


H.P.

[The old gentleman had left his chair opposite and taken a seat by the schoolmistress and myself, a little way from the table. — It 's true, it 's true, — said the old gentleman. — He took hold of a steel watch-chain, which carried a large, square gold key at one end and was supposed to have some kind of timekeeper at the other. With some trouble he dragged up an ancient-looking, thick, silver, bull's-eye watch. He looked at it for a moment, — hesitated, — touched the inner corner of his right eye with the pulp of his middle finger, — looked at the face of the watch, — said it was getting into the forenoon, — then opened the watch and handed me the loose outside case without a word. — The watch-paper had been pink once, and had a faint tinge still, as if all its tender life had not yet quite faded out. Two little birds, a flower, and, in small school-girl letters, a date, — 17 . . — no matter. — Before I was thirteen years old, — said the old gentleman. — I don't know what was in that young schoolmistress's head, nor why she should have done it; but she took out the watch-paper and put it softly to her lips, as if she were kissing the poor thing that made it so long ago. The old gentleman took the

watch-paper carefully from her, replaced it, turned away and walked out, holding the watch in his hand. I saw him pass the window a moment after with that foolish white hat on his head; he could n't have been thinking what he was about when he put it on. So the schoolmistress and I were left alone. I drew my chair a shade nearer to her, and continued.]

And since I am talking of early recollections, I don't know why I should n't mention some others that still cling to me, — not that you will attach any very particular meaning to these same images so full of significance to me, but that you will find something parallel to them in your own memory. You remember, perhaps, what I said one day about smells. There were certain *sounds* also which had a mysterious suggestiveness to me, — not so intense, perhaps, as that connected with the other sense, but yet peculiar, and never to be forgotten.

The first was the creaking of the wood-sleds, bringing their loads of oak and walnut from the country, as the slow-swinging oxen trailed them along over the complaining snow, in the cold, brown light of early morning. Lying in bed and listening to

their dreary music had a pleasure in it akin to the Lucretian luxury, or that which Byron speaks of as to be enjoyed in looking on at a battle by one "who hath no friend, no brother there."

There was another sound, in itself so sweet, and so connected with one of those simple and curious superstitions of childhood of which I have spoken, that I can never cease to cherish a sad sort of love for it. — Let me tell the superstitious fancy first. The Puritan "Sabbath," as everybody knows, began at "sundown" on Saturday evening. To such observance of it I was born and bred. As the large, round disk of day declined, a stillness, a solemnity, a somewhat melancholy hush came over us all. It was time for work to cease, and for playthings to be put away. The world of active life passed into the shadow of an eclipse, not to emerge until the sun should sink again beneath the horizon.

It was in this stillness of the world without and of the soul within that the pulsating lullaby of the evening crickets used to make itself most distinctly heard, — so that I well remember I used to think that the purring of these little creatures, which mingled with

batrachian hymns from the neighboring swamp, *was peculiar to Saturday evenings.* I don't know that anything could give a clearer idea of the quieting and subduing effect of the old habit of observance of what was considered holy time, than this strange, childish fancy.

Yes, and there was still another sound which mingled its solemn cadences with the waking and sleeping dreams of my boyhood. It was heard only at times, — a deep, muffled roar, which rose and fell, not loud, but vast, — a whistling boy would have drowned it for his next neighbor, but it must have been heard over the space of a hundred square miles. I used to wonder what this might be. Could it be the roar of the thousand wheels and the ten thousand footsteps jarring and trampling along the stones of the neighboring city? That would be continuous; but this, as I have said, rose and fell in regular rhythm. I remember being told, and I suppose this to have been the true solution, that it was the sound of the waves, after a high wind, breaking on the long beaches many miles distant. I should really like to know whether any observing people living ten miles, more or less, inland

from long beaches, — in such a town, for instance, as Cantabridge, in the eastern part of the Territory of the Massachusetts, — have ever observed any such sound, and whether it was rightly accounted for as above.

Mingling with these inarticulate sounds in the low murmur of memory, are the echoes of certain voices I have heard at rare intervals. I grieve to say it, but our people, I think, have not generally agreeable voices. The marrowy organisms, with skins that shed water like the backs of ducks, with smooth surfaces neatly padded beneath, and velvet linings to their singing-pipes, are not so common among us as that other pattern of humanity with angular outlines and plane surfaces, arid integuments, hair like the fibrous covering of a cocoa-nut in gloss and suppleness as well as color, and voices at once thin and strenuous; — acidulous enough to produce effervescence with alkalis, and stridulous enough to sing duets with the katydids. I think our conversational soprano, as sometimes overheard in the cars, arising from a group of young persons, who may have taken the train at one of our great industrial centres, for instance, — young persons of the female sex, we will

say, who have bustled in, full-dressed, engaged in loud strident speech, and who, after free discussion, have fixed on two or more double seats, which having secured, they proceed to eat apples and hand round daguerreotypes, — I say I think the conversational soprano, heard under these circumstances, would not be among the allurements the old Enemy would put in requisition, were he getting up a new temptation of St. Anthony.

There are sweet voices among us, we all know, and voices not musical, it may be, to those who hear them for the first time, yet sweeter to us than any we shall hear until we listen to some warbling angel in the overture to that eternity of blissful harmonies we hope to enjoy. — But why should I tell lies? If my friends love me, it is because I try to tell the truth. I never heard but two voices in my life that frightened me by their sweetness.

— Frightened you? — said the schoolmistress. — Yes, frightened me. They made me feel as if there might be constituted a creature with such a chord in her voice to some string in another's soul, that, if she but spoke, he would leave all and follow her,

though it were into the jaws of Erebus. Our only chance to keep our wits is, that there are so few natural chords between others' voices and this string in our souls, and that those which at first may have jarred a little by and by come into harmony with it. — But I tell you this is no fiction. You may call the story of Ulysses and the Sirens a fable, but what will you say to Mario and the poor lady who followed him?

— Whose were those two voices that bewitched me so? — They both belonged to German women. One was a chambermaid, not otherwise fascinating. The key of my room at a certain great hotel was missing, and this Teutonic maiden was summoned to give information respecting it. The simple soul was evidently not long from her motherland, and spoke with sweet uncertainty of dialect. But to hear her wonder and lament and suggest with soft, liquid inflexions, and low, sad murmurs, in tones as full of serious tenderness for the fate of the lost key as if it had been a child that had strayed from its mother, was so winning, that, had her features and figure been as delicious as her accents, — if she had looked like the marble Clytie, for instance, — why, all I can say is —

[The schoolmistress opened her eyes so wide, that I stopped short.]

I was only going to say that I should have drowned myself. For Lake Erie was close by, and it is so much better to accept asphyxia, which takes only three minutes by the watch, than a *mésalliance*, that lasts fifty years to begin with, and then passes along down the line of descent (breaking out in all manner of boorish manifestations of feature and manner, which, if men were only as short-lived as horses, could be readily traced back through the square-roots and the cube-roots of the family stem on which you have hung the armorial bearings of the De Champignons or the De la Morues, until one came to beings that ate with knives and said "Haow?"), that no person of right feeling could have hesitated for a single moment.

The second of the ravishing voices I have heard was, as I have said, that of another German woman. — I suppose I shall ruin myself by saying that such a voice could not have come from any Americanized human being.

— What was there in it? — said the schoolmistress, — and, upon my word, her

tones were so very musical, that I almost wished I had said three voices instead of two, and not made the unpatriotic remark above reported. — Oh, I said, it had so much *woman* in it, — *muliebrity*, as well as *femineity ;* — no self-assertion, such as free suffrage introduces into every word and movement; large, vigorous nature, running back to those huge-limbed Germans of Tacitus, but subdued by the reverential training and tuned by the kindly culture of fifty generations. Sharp business habits, a lean soil, independence, enterprise, and east winds, are not the best things for the larynx. Still, you hear noble voices among us, — I have known families famous for them, — but ask the first person you meet a question, and ten to one there is a hard, sharp, metallic matter-of-business clink in the accents of the answer, that produces the effect of one of those bells which small trades-people connect with their shop-doors, and which spring upon your ear with such vivacity, as you enter, that your first impulse is to retire at once from the precincts.

— Ah, but I must not forget that dear little child I saw and heard in a French hospital. Between two and three years old.

Fell out of her chair and snapped both thigh-bones. Lying in bed, patient, gentle. Rough students round her, some in white aprons, looking fearfully business-like; but the child placid, perfectly still. I spoke to her, and the blessed little creature answered me in a voice of such heavenly sweetness, with that reedy thrill in it which you have heard in the thrush's even-song, that I seem to hear it at this moment, while I am writing, so many, many years afterwards. — *C'est tout comme un serin*, said the French student at my side.

These are the voices which struck the key-note of my conceptions as to what the sounds we are to hear in heaven will be, if we shall enter through one of the twelve gates of pearl. There must be other things besides aërolites that wander from their own spheres to ours; and when we speak of celestial sweetness or beauty, we may be nearer the literal truth than we dream. If mankind generally are the shipwrecked survivors of some pre-Adamitic cataclysm, set adrift in these little open boats of humanity to make one more trial to reach the shore, — as some grave theologians have maintained, — if, in plain English, men are the ghosts of dead

devils who have "died into life" (to borrow an expression from Keats), and walk the earth in a suit of living rags which lasts three or four score summers, — why, there must have been a few good spirits sent to keep them company, and these sweet voices I speak of must belong to them.

— I wish you could once hear my sister's voice, — said the schoolmistress.

If it is like yours, it must be a pleasant one, — said I.

I never thought mine was anything, — said the schoolmistress.

How should you know? — said I. — People never hear their own voices, — any more than they see their own faces. There is not even a looking-glass for the voice. Of course, there is something audible to us when we speak; but that something is not our own voice as it is known to all our acquaintances. I think, if an image spoke to us in our own tones, we should not know them in the least. — How pleasant it would be, if in another state of being we could have shapes like our former selves for playthings, — we standing outside or inside of them, as we liked, and they being to us just what we used to be to others!

— I wonder if there will be nothing like what we call "play," after our earthly toys are broken, — said the schoolmistress.

Hush, — said I, — what will the divinity-student say?

[I thought she was hit, that time; — but the shot must have gone over her, or on one side of her; she did not flinch.]

Oh, — said the schoolmistress, — he must look out for my sister's heresies; I am afraid he will be too busy with them to take care of mine.

Do you mean to say, — said I, — that it is *your sister* whom that student —

[The young fellow commonly known as John, who had been sitting on the barrel, smoking, jumped off just then, kicked over the barrel, gave it a push with his foot that set it rolling, and stuck his saucy-looking face in at the window so as to cut my question off in the middle; and the schoolmistress leaving the room a few minutes afterwards, I did not have a chance to finish it.

The young fellow came in and sat down in a chair, putting his heels on the top of another.

Pooty girl, — said he.

A fine young lady, — I replied.

Keeps a fust-rate school, according to accounts, — said he, — teaches all sorts of things, — Latin and Italian and music. Folks rich once, — smashed up. She went right ahead as smart as if she 'd been born to work. That 's the kind o' girl I go for. I 'd marry her, only two or three other girls would drown themselves, if I did.

I think the above is the longest speech of this young fellow's which I have put on record. I do not like to change his peculiar expressions, for this is one of those cases in which the style is the man, as M. de Buffon says. The fact is, the young fellow is a good-hearted creature enough, only too fond of his jokes, — and if it were not for those heat-lightning winks on one side of his face, I should not mind his fun much.]

[Some days after this, when the company were together again, I talked a little.]

— I don't think I have a genuine hatred for anybody. I am well aware that I differ herein from the sturdy English moralist and the stout American tragedian. I don't deny that I hate *the sight* of certain people; but the qualities which make me tend to hate the man himself are such as I am so much

disposed to pity, that, except under immediate aggravation, I feel kindly enough to the worst of them. It is such a sad thing to be born a sneaking fellow, so much worse than to inherit a hump-back or a couple of club-feet, that I sometimes feel as if we ought to love the crippled souls, if I may use this expression, with a certain tenderness which we need not waste on noble natures. One who is born with such congenital incapacity that nothing can make a gentleman of him is entitled, not to our wrath, but to our profoundest sympathy. But as we cannot help hating the sight of these people, just as we do that of physical deformities, we gradually eliminate them from our society, — we love them, but open the window and let them go. By the time decent people reach middle age they have weeded their circle pretty well of these unfortunates, unless they have a taste for such animals; in which case, no matter what their position may be, there is something, you may be sure, in their natures akin to that of their wretched parasites.

— The divinity-student wished to know what I thought of affinities, as well as of antipathies; did I believe in love at first sight?

Sir, — said I, — all men love all women.

That is the *primâ-facie* aspect of the case. The Court of Nature assumes the law to be, that all men do so; and the individual man is bound to show cause why he does not love any particular woman. A man, says one of my old black-letter law-books, may show divers good reasons, as thus: He hath not seen the person named in the indictment; she is of tender age, or the reverse of that; she hath certain personal disqualifications, — as, for instance, she is a blackamoor, or hath an ill-favored countenance; or, his capacity of loving being limited, his affections are engrossed by a previous comer; and so of other conditions. Not the less is it true that he is bound by duty and inclined by nature to love each and every woman. Therefore it is that each woman virtually summons every man to show cause why he doth not love her. This is not by written document, or direct speech, for the most part, but by certain signs of silk, gold, and other materials, which say to all men, — Look on me and love, as in duty bound. Then the man pleadeth his special incapacity, whatsoever that may be, — as, for instance, impecuniosity, or that he hath one or many wives in his household, or that he is of mean figure, or small capacity; of

which reasons it may be noted, that the first is, according to late decisions, of chiefest authority. — So far the old law-book. But there is a note from an older authority, saying that every woman doth also love each and every man, except there be some good reason to the contrary ; and a very observing friend of mine, a young unmarried clergyman, tells me, that, so far as his experience goes, he has reason to think the ancient author had fact to justify his statement.

I 'll tell you how it is with the pictures of women we fall in love with at first sight.

— We a'n't talking about pictures, — said the landlady's daughter, — we 're talking about women.

I understood that we were speaking of love at sight, — I remarked, mildly. — Now, as all a man knows about a woman whom he looks at is just what a picture as big as a copper, or a "nickel," rather, at the bottom of his eye can teach him, I think I am right in saying we are talking about the pictures of women. — Well, now, the reason why a man is not desperately in love with ten thousand women at once is just that which prevents all our portraits being distinctly seen upon that wall. They all *are* painted there by reflection from our faces,

but because *all* of them are painted on each spot, and each on the same surface, and many other objects at the same time, no one is seen as a picture. But darken a chamber and let a single pencil of rays in through a key-hole, then you have a picture on the wall. We never fall in love with a woman in distinction from women, until we can get an image of her through a pin-hole; and then we can see nothing else, and nobody but ourselves can see the image in our mental camera-obscura.

— My friend, the Poet, tells me he has to leave town whenever the anniversaries come round.

What 's the difficulty? — Why, they all want him to get up and make speeches, or songs, or toasts; which is just the very thing he does n't want to do. He is an old story, he says, and hates to show on these occasions. But they tease him, and coax him, and can't do without him, and feel all over his poor weak head until they get their fingers on the *fontanelle* (the Professor will tell you what this means, — he says the one at the top of the head always remains open in poets), until, by gentle pressure on that soft pulsating spot, they stupefy him to the point of acquiescence.

There are times, though, he says, when it is a pleasure, before going to some agreeable meeting, to rush out into one's garden and clutch up a handful of what grows there, — weeds and violets together, — not cutting them off, but pulling them up by the roots with the brown earth they grow in sticking to them. That 's his idea of a post-prandial performance. Look here, now. These verses I am going to read you, he tells me, were pulled up by the roots just in that way, the other day. — Beautiful entertainment, — names there on the plates that flow from all English-speaking tongues as familiarly as *and* or *the;* entertainers known wherever good poetry and fair title-pages are held in esteem; guest a kind-hearted, modest, genial, hopeful poet, who sings to the hearts of his countrymen, the British people, the songs of good cheer which the better days to come, as all honest souls trust and believe, will turn into the prose of common life. My friend, the Poet, says you must not read such a string of verses too literally. If he trimmed it nicely below, you would n't see the roots, he says, and he likes to keep them, and a little of the soil clinging to them.

This is the farewell my friend, the Poet, read to his and our friend, the Poet: —



Brave singer of the coming time,
Sweet minstrel of the joyous present,
Crowned with the noblest wreath of rhyme,
The holly-leaf of Ayrshire's peasant,
Good-bye! Good-bye! — Our hearts and hands,
Our lips in honest Saxon phrases,
Cry, God be with him, till he stands
His feet among the English daisies!

'T is here we part; — for other eyes
The busy deck, the fluttering streamer,
The dripping arms that plunge and rise,
The waves in foam, the ship in tremor,
The kerchiefs waving from the pier,
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,
The deep blue desert lone and drear,
With heaven above and home before him!

His home! — the Western giant smiles,
  And twirls the spotty globe to find it, —
This little speck the British Isles?
  'T is but a freckle, — never mind it! —
He laughs, and all his prairies roll,
  Each gurgling cataract roars and chuckles,
And ridges stretched from pole to pole
  Heave till they crack their iron knuckles.

But Memory blushes at the sneer,
  And Honor turns with frown defiant,
And Freedom, leaning on her spear,
  Laughs louder than the laughing giant: —
"An islet is a world," she said,
  "When glory with its dust has blended,
And Britain keeps her noble dead
  Till earth and seas and skies are rended!"

Beneath each swinging forest-bough
  Some arm as stout in death reposes, —
From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow
  Her valor's life-blood runs in roses;
Nay, let our brothers of the West
  Write smiling in their florid pages,
One half her soil has walked the rest
  In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages!

Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,
  From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,
The British oak with rooted grasp
  Her slender handful holds together, —
With cliffs of white and bowers of green,
  And Ocean narrowing to caress her,
And hills and threaded streams between, —
  Our little mother isle, God bless her!

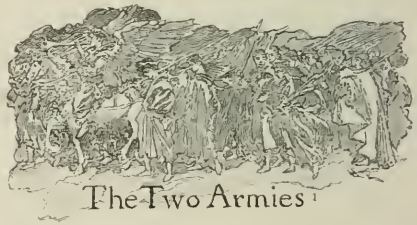
In earth's broad temple where we stand,
Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,
We hold the missal in our hand,
Bright with the lines our Mother taught us:
Where'er its blazoned page betrays
The glistening links of gilded fetters,
Behold, the half-turned leaf displays
Her rubric stained in crimson letters!

Enough! To speed a parting friend
'T is vain alike to speak and listen; —
Yet stay, — these feeble accents blend
With rays of light from eyes that glisten.
Good-bye! once more, — and kindly tell
In words of peace the young world's story, —
And say, besides, — we love too well
Our mothers' soil, our fathers' glory!

When my friend, the Professor, found that my friend, the Poet, had been coming out in this full-blown style, he got a little excited, as you may have seen a canary, sometimes, when another strikes up. The Professor says he knows he can lecture, and thinks he can write verses. At any rate, he has often tried, and now he was determined to try again. So when some professional friends of his called him up, one day, after a feast of reason and a regular "freshet" of soul which had lasted two or three hours, he read them these verses. He introduced them with a few remarks, he told me, of

which the only one he remembered was this: that he had rather write a single line which one among them should think worth remembering than set them all laughing with a string of epigrams. It was all right, I don't doubt; at any rate, that was his fancy then, and perhaps another time he may be obstinately hilarious; however, it may be that he is growing graver, for time is a fact so long as clocks and watches continue to go, and a cat can't be a kitten always, as the old gentleman opposite said the other day.

You must listen to this seriously, for I think the Professor was very much in earnest when he wrote it.



The Two Armies [1]

AS Life's unending column pours,
Two marshalled hosts are seen, —
Two armies on the trampled shores
That Death flows black between.

[1] This poem was written for and read at a meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

One marches to the drum-beat's roll,
The wide-mouthed clarion's bray,
And bears upon a crimson scroll,
"Our glory is to slay."

One moves in silence by the stream,
With sad, yet watchful eyes,
Calm as the patient planet's gleam
That walks the clouded skies.

Along its front no sabres shine,
No blood-red pennons wave;
Its banner bears the single line,
"Our duty is to save."

For those no death-bed's lingering shade;
At Honor's trumpet-call,
With knitted brow and lifted blade
In Glory's arms they fall.

For these no clashing falchions bright,
No stirring battle-cry;
The bloodless stabber calls by night, —
Each answers, "Here am I!"

For those the sculptor's laurelled bust,
The builder's marble piles,
The anthems pealing o'er their dust
Through long cathedral aisles.

For these the blossom-sprinkled turf
That floods the lonely graves,
When Spring rolls in her sea-green surf
In flowery-foaming waves.

Two paths lead upward from below,
And angels wait above,
Who count each burning life-drop's flow,
Each falling tear of love.

Though from the Hero's bleeding breast
Her pulses Freedom drew,
Though the white lilies in her crest
Sprang from that scarlet dew, —

While Valor's haughty champions wait
Till all their scars are shown,
Love walks unchallenged through the gate,
To sit beside the Throne !





X

THE schoolmistress came down with a rose in her hair, — a fresh June rose. She has been walking early; she has brought back two others, — one on each cheek.

I told her so, in some such pretty phrase as I could muster for the occasion. Those two blush-roses I just spoke of turned into a couple of damasks. I suppose all this went through my mind, for this was what I went on to say: —]

I love the damask rose best of all. The flowers our mothers and sisters used to love and cherish, those which grow beneath our eaves and by our doorstep, are the ones

we always love best. If the Houyhnhnms should ever catch me, and, finding me particularly vicious and unmanageable, send a man-tamer to Rareyfy me, I 'll tell you what drugs he would have to take and how he would have to use them. Imagine yourself reading a number of the Houyhnhnm Gazette, giving an account of such an experiment.

"MAN-TAMING EXTRAORDINARY.

"The soft-hoofed semi-quadruped recently captured was subjected to the art of our distinguished man-tamer in presence of a numerous assembly. The animal was led in by two stout ponies, closely confined by straps to prevent his sudden and dangerous tricks of shoulder-hitting and foot-striking. His countenance expressed the utmost degree of ferocity and cunning.

"The operator took a handful of *budding lilac-leaves*, and crushing them slightly between his hoofs, so as to bring out their peculiar fragrance, fastened them to the end of a long pole and held them towards the creature. Its expression changed in an instant, — it drew in their fragrance eagerly, and attempted to seize them with its soft

split hoofs. Having thus quieted his suspicious subject, the operator proceeded to tie a *blue hyacinth* to the end of the pole and held it out towards the wild animal. The effect was magical. Its eyes filled as if with raindrops, and its lips trembled as it pressed them to the flower. After this it was perfectly quiet, and brought a measure of corn to the man-tamer, without showing the least disposition to strike with the feet or hit from the shoulder."

That will do for the Houyhnhnm Gazette. — Do you ever wonder why poets talk so much about flowers? Did you ever hear of a poet who did not talk about them? Don't you think a poem, which, for the sake of being original, should leave them out, would be like those verses where the letter *a* or *e* or some other is omitted? No, — they will bloom over and over again in poems as in the summer fields, to the end of time, always old and always new. Why should we be more shy of repeating ourselves than the spring be tired of blossoms or the night of stars? Look at Nature. She never wearies of saying over her floral pater-noster. In the crevices of Cyclopean walls, — in the

dust where men lie, dust also, — on the mounds that bury huge cities, the wreck of Nineveh and the Babel-heap, — still that same sweet prayer and benediction. The Amen! of Nature is always a flower.

Are you tired of my trivial personalities, — those splashes and streaks of sentiment, sometimes perhaps of sentimentality, which you may see when I show you my heart's corolla as if it were a tulip? Pray, do not give yourself the trouble to fancy me an idiot whose conceit it is to treat himself as an exceptional being. It is because you are just like me that I talk and know that you will listen. We are all splashed and streaked with sentiments, — not with precisely the same tints, or in exactly the same patterns, but by the same hand and from the same palette.

I don't believe any of you happen to have just the same passion for the blue hyacinth which I have, — very certainly not for the crushed lilac-leaf-buds; many of you do not know how sweet they are. You love the smell of the sweet-fern and the bay-berry-leaves, I don't doubt; but I hardly think that the last bewitches you with young memories as it does me. For the same reason I

come back to damask roses, after having raised a good many of the rarer varieties. I like to go to operas and concerts, but there are queer little old homely sounds that are better than music to me. However, I suppose it's foolish to tell such things.

— It is pleasant to be foolish at the right time, — said the divinity-student; saying it, however, in one of the dead languages, which I think are unpopular for summer-reading, and therefore do not bear quotation as such.

Well now, — said I, — suppose a good, clean, wholesome-looking countryman's cart stops opposite my door. — Do I want any huckleberries? — If I do not, there are those that do. Thereupon my soft-voiced handmaid bears out a large tin pan, and then the wholesome countryman, heaping the peck-measure, spreads his broad hands around its lower arc to confine the wild and frisky berries, and so they run nimbly along the narrowing channel until they tumble rustling down in a black cascade and tinkle on the resounding metal beneath. — I won't say that this rushing huckleberry hail-storm has not more music for me than the "Anvil Chorus."

— I wonder how my great trees are coming on this summer.

— Where are your great trees, Sir? — said the divinity-student.

Oh, all round about New England. I call all trees mine that I have put my wedding-ring on, and I have as many tree-wives as Brigham Young has human ones.

— One set 's as green as the other, — exclaimed a boarder, who has never been identified.

They 're all Bloomers, — said the young fellow called John.

[I should have rebuked this trifling with language, if our landlady's daughter had not asked me just then what I meant by putting my wedding-ring on a tree.]

Why, measuring it with my thirty-foot tape, my dear, — said I, — I have worn a tape almost out on the rough barks of our old New England elms and other big trees. — Don't you want to hear me talk trees a little now? That is one of my specialties.

[So they all agreed that they should like to hear me talk about trees.]

I want you to understand, in the first place, that I have a most intense, passionate fondness for trees in general, and have had

several romantic attachments to certain trees in particular. Now, if you expect me to hold forth in a "scientific" way about my tree-loves, — to talk, for instance, of the Ulmus Americana, and describe the ciliated edges of its samara, and all that, — you are an anserine individual, and I must refer you to a dull friend who will discourse to you of such matters. What should you think of a lover who should describe the idol of his heart in the language of science, thus: Class, Mammalia; Order, Primates; Genus, Homo; Species, Europeus; Variety, Brown; Individual, Ann Eliza; Dental Formula, $i\frac{2-2}{2-2}c\frac{1-1}{1-1}p\frac{2-2}{2-2}m\frac{3-3}{3-3}$, and so on?

No, my friends, I shall speak of trees as we see them, love them, adore them in the fields, where they are alive, holding their green sun-shades over our heads, talking to us with their hundred thousand whispering tongues, looking down on us with that sweet meekness which belongs to huge, but limited organisms, — which one sees in the brown eyes of oxen, but most in the patient posture, the outstretched arms, and the heavy-drooping robes of these vast beings endowed with life, but not with soul, — which out-

grow us and outlive us, but stand helpless, — poor things! — while Nature dresses and undresses them, like so many full-sized, but under-witted children.

Did you ever read old Daddy Gilpin? Slowest of men, even of English men; yet delicious in his slowness, as is the light of a sleepy eye in woman. I always supposed "Dr. Syntax" was written to make fun of him. I have a whole set of his works, and am very proud of it, with its gray paper, and open type, and long ff, and orange-juice landscapes. Père Gilpin had the kind of science I like in the study of Nature, — a little less observation than White of Selborne, but a little more poetry. — Just think of applying the Linnæan system to an elm! Who cares how many stamens or pistils that little brown flower, which comes out before the leaf, may have to classify it by? What we want is the meaning, the character, the expression of a tree, as a kind and as an individual.

There is a mother-idea in each particular kind of tree, which, if well marked, is probably embodied in the poetry of every language. Take the oak, for instance, and we find it always standing as a type of strength

and endurance. I wonder if you ever thought of the single mark of supremacy which distinguishes this tree from those around it? The others shirk the work of resisting gravity; the oak defies it. It chooses the horizontal direction for its limbs so that their whole weight may tell, — and then stretches them out fifty or sixty feet, so that the strain may be mighty enough to be worth resisting. You will find, that, in passing from the extreme downward droop of the branches of the weeping-willow to the extreme upward inclination of those of the poplar, they sweep nearly half a circle. At 90° the oak stops short; to slant upward another degree would mark infirmity of purpose; to bend downwards, weakness of organization. The American elm betrays something of both; yet sometimes, as we shall see, puts on a certain resemblance to its sturdier neighbor.

It won't do to be exclusive in our taste about trees. There is hardly one of them which has not peculiar beauties in some fitting place for it. I remember a tall poplar of monumental proportions and aspect, a vast pillar of glossy green, placed on the summit of a lofty hill, and a beacon to all the country round. A native of that region

saw fit to build his house very near it, and, having a fancy that it might blow down some time or other, and exterminate himself and any incidental relatives who might be "stopping" or "tarrying" with him, — also laboring under the delusion that human life is under all circumstances to be preferred to vegetable existence, — had the great poplar cut down. It is so easy to say, "It is only a poplar," and so much harder to replace its living cone than to build a granite obelisk!

I must tell you about some of my tree-wives. I was at one period of my life much devoted to the young lady-population of Rhode Island, a small but delightful State in the neighborhood of Pawtucket. The number of inhabitants being not very large, I had leisure, during my visits to the Providence Plantations, to inspect the face of the country in the intervals of more fascinating studies of physiognomy. I heard some talk of a great elm a short distance from the locality just mentioned. "Let us see the great elm," — I said, and proceeded to find it, — knowing that it was on a certain farm in a place called Johnston, if I remember rightly. I shall never forget my ride and my introduction to the great Johnston elm.

I always tremble for a celebrated tree when I approach it for the first time. Provincialism has no *scale* of excellence in man or vegetable; it never knows a first-rate article of either kind when it has it, and is constantly taking second and third rate ones for Nature's best. I have often fancied the tree was afraid of me, and that a sort of shiver came over it as over a betrothed maiden when she first stands before the unknown to whom she has been plighted. Before the measuring tape the proudest tree of them all quails and shrinks into itself. All those stories of four or five men stretching their arms around it and not touching each other's fingers, of one's pacing the shadow at noon and making it so many hundred feet, die upon its leafy lips in the presence of the awful ribbon which has strangled so many false pretensions.

As I rode along the pleasant way, watching eagerly for the object of my journey, the rounded tops of the elms rose from time to time at the road-side. Wherever one looked taller and fuller than the rest, I asked myself, — "Is this it?" But as I drew nearer, they grew smaller, — or it proved, perhaps, that two standing in a line

had looked like one, and so deceived me. At last, all at once, when I was not thinking of it, — I declare to you it makes my flesh creep when I think of it now, — all at once I saw a great green cloud swelling in the horizon, so vast, so symmetrical, of such Olympian majesty and imperial supremacy among the lesser forest-growths, that my heart stopped short, then jumped at my ribs as a hunter springs at a five-barred gate, and I felt all through me, without need of uttering the words, — "This is it!"

You will find this tree described, with many others, in the excellent Report upon the Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts. The author has given my friend the Professor credit for some of his measurements, but measured this tree himself, carefully. It is a grand elm for size of trunk, spread of limbs, and muscular development, — one of the first, perhaps the first, of the first class of New England elms.

The largest actual girth I have ever found at five feet from the ground is in the great elm lying a stone's throw or two north of the main road (if my points of compass are right) in Springfield. But this has much the appearance of having been formed by

the union of two trunks growing side by side.

The West-Springfield elm and one upon Northampton meadows belong also to the first class of trees.

There is a noble old wreck of an elm at Hatfield, which used to spread its claws out over a circumference of thirty-five feet or more before they covered the foot of its bole up with earth. This is the American elm most like an oak of any I have ever seen.

The Sheffield elm is equally remarkable for size and perfection of form. I have seen nothing that comes near it in Berkshire County, and few to compare with it anywhere. I am not sure that I remember any other first-class elms in New England, but there may be many.

— What makes a first-class elm? — Why, size, in the first place, and chiefly. Anything over twenty feet of clear girth, five feet above the ground, and with a spread of branches a hundred feet across, may claim that title, according to my scale. All of them, with the questionable exception of the Springfield tree above referred to, stop, so far as my experience goes, at about twenty-

two or twenty-three feet of girth and a hundred and twenty of spread.

Elms of the second class, generally ranging from fourteen to eighteen feet, are comparatively common. The queen of them all is that glorious tree near one of the churches in Springfield. Beautiful and stately she is beyond all praise. The "great tree" on Boston Common comes in the second rank, as does the one at Cohasset, which used to have, and probably has still, a head as round as an apple-tree, and that at Newburyport, with scores of others which might be mentioned. These last two have perhaps been over-celebrated. Both, however, are pleasing vegetables. The poor old Pittsfield elm lives on its past reputation. A wig of false leaves is indispensable to make it presentable.

[I don't doubt there may be some monster-elm or other, vegetating green, but inglorious, in some remote New England village, which only wants a sacred singer to make it celebrated. Send us your measurements, — (certified by the postmaster, to avoid possible imposition), — circumference five feet from soil, length of line from bough-end to bough-end, and we will see what can be done for you.]

— I wish somebody would get us up the following work: —

SYLVA NOVANGLICA.

Photographs of New England Elms and other Trees, taken upon the Same Scale of Magnitude. With Letter-Press Descriptions, by a Distinguished Literary Gentleman. Boston —— —— & Co. 185 . .

The same camera should be used, — so far as possible, — at a fixed distance. Our friend, who has given us so many interesting figures in his "Trees of America," must not think this Prospectus invades his province; a dozen portraits, with lively descriptions, would be a pretty complement to his large work, which, so far as published, I find excellent. If my plan were carried out, and another series of a dozen English trees photographed on the same scale, the comparison would be charming.

It has always been a favorite idea of mine to bring the life of the Old and the New World face to face, by an accurate comparison of their various types of organization. We should begin with man, of course; institute a large and exact comparison between the development of *la pianta umana*, as

Alfieri called it, in different sections of each country, in the different callings, at different ages, estimating height, weight, force by the dynamometer and the spirometer, and finishing off with a series of typical photographs, giving the principal national physiognomies. Mr. Hutchinson has given us some excellent English data to begin with.

Then I would follow this up by contrasting the various parallel forms of life in the two continents. Our naturalists have often referred to this incidentally or expressly; but the *animus* of Nature in the two half globes of the planet is so momentous a point of interest to our race, that it should be made a subject of express and elaborate study. Go out with me into that walk which we call *the Mall*, and look at the English and American elms. The American elm is tall, graceful, slender-sprayed, and drooping as if from languor. The English elm is compact, robust, holds its branches up, and carries its leaves for weeks longer than our own native tree.

Is this typical of the creative force on the two sides of the ocean, or not? Nothing but a careful comparison through the whole realm of life can answer this question.

There is a parallelism without identity in the animal and vegetable life of the two continents, which favors the task of comparison in an extraordinary manner. Just as we have two trees alike in many ways, yet not the same, both elms, yet easily distinguishable, just so we have a complete flora and a fauna, which, parting from the same ideal, embody it with various modifications. Inventive power is the only quality of which the Creative Intelligence seems to be economical; just as with our largest human minds, that is the divinest of faculties, and the one that most exhausts the mind which exercises it. As the same patterns have very commonly been followed, we can see which is worked out in the largest spirit, and determine the exact limitations under which the Creator places the movement of life in all its manifestations in either locality. We should find ourselves in a very false position, if it should prove that Anglo-Saxons can't live here, but die out, if not kept up by fresh supplies, as Dr. Knox and other more or less wise persons have maintained. It may turn out the other way, as I have heard one of our literary celebrities argue, — and though I took the

other side, I liked his best, — that the American is the Englishman reinforced.

— Will you walk out and look at those elms with me after breakfast? — I said to the schoolmistress.

[I am not going to tell lies about it, and say that she blushed, — as I suppose she ought to have done, at such a tremendous piece of gallantry as that was for our boarding-house. On the contrary, she turned a little pale, — but smiled brightly and said, — Yes, with pleasure, but she must walk towards her school. — She went for her bonnet. — The old gentleman opposite followed her with his eyes, and said he wished he was a young fellow. Presently she came down, looking very pretty in her half-mourning bonnet, and carrying a school-book in her hand.]

MY FIRST WALK WITH THE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

This is the shortest way, — she said, as we came to a corner. — Then we won't take it, — said I. — The schoolmistress laughed a little, and said she was ten minutes early, so she could go round.

We walked under Mr. Paddock's row of

English elms.[1] The gray squirrels were out looking for their breakfasts, and one of them came toward us in light, soft, intermittent leaps, until he was close to the rail of the burial-ground. He was on a grave with a broad blue-slate-stone at its head, and a shrub growing on it. The stone said this was the grave of a young man who was the son of an Honorable gentleman, and who died a hundred years ago and more. — Oh, yes, *died*, — with a small triangular mark in one breast, and another smaller opposite, in his back, where another young man's rapier had slid through his body; and so he lay down out there on the Common, and was found cold the next morning, with the night-dews and the death-dews mingled on his forehead.

Let us have one look at poor Benjamin's grave, — said I. — His bones lie where his body was laid so long ago, and where the stone says they lie, — which is more than can be said of most of the tenants of this and several other burial-grounds.

[The most accursed act of Vandalism

[1] " Mr. Paddock's row of English elms " has gone, but " Poor Benjamin " lies quietly under the same stone the schoolmistress saw through the iron rails.

ever committed within my knowledge was the uprooting of the ancient gravestones in three at least of our city burial-grounds, and one at least just outside the city, and planting them in rows to suit the taste for symmetry of the perpetrators. Many years ago, when this disgraceful process was going on under my eyes, I addressed an indignant remonstrance to a leading journal. I suppose it was deficient in literary elegance, or too warm in its language; for no notice was taken of it, and the hyena-horror was allowed to complete itself in the face of daylight. I have never got over it. The bones of my own ancestors, being entombed, lie beneath their own tablet; but the upright stones have been shuffled about like chessmen; and nothing short of the Day of Judgment will tell whose dust lies beneath any of those records, meant by affection to mark one small spot as sacred to some cherished memory. Shame! shame! shame! — that is all I can say. It was on public thoroughfares, under the eye of authority, that this infamy was enacted. The red Indians would have known better; the selectmen of an African kraal-village would have had more respect for their ancestors. I should like to

see the gravestones which have been disturbed all removed, and the ground levelled, leaving the flat tombstones; epitaphs were never famous for truth, but the old reproach of "Here *lies*" never had such a wholesale illustration as in these outraged burial-places, where the stone does lie above and the bones do not lie beneath.]

Stop before we turn away, and breathe a woman's sigh over poor Benjamin's dust. Love killed him, I think. Twenty years old, and out there fighting another young fellow on the Common, in the cool of that old July evening; — yes, there must have been love at the bottom of it.

The schoolmistress dropped a rosebud she had in her hand, through the rails, upon the grave of Benjamin Woodbridge. That was all her comment upon what I told her. — How women love Love! said I; — but she did not speak.

We came opposite the head of a place or court running eastward from the main street. — Look down there, — I said. — My friend, the Professor, lived in that house at the left hand, next the further corner, for years and years. He died out of it, the other day. — Died? — said the schoolmistress. — Cer-

tainly, — said I. — We die out of houses, just as we die out of our bodies. A commercial smash kills a hundred men's houses for them, as a railroad crash kills their mortal frames and drives out the immortal tenants. Men sicken of houses until at last they quit them, as the soul leaves its body when it is tired of its infirmities. The body has been called " the house we live in " ; the house is quite as much the body we live in. Shall I tell you some things the Professor said the other day? — Do! — said the schoolmistress.

A man's body, — said the Professor, — is whatever is occupied by his will and his sensibility. The small room down there, where I wrote those papers you remember reading, was much more a portion of my body than a paralytic's senseless and motionless arm or leg is of his.

The soul of a man has a series of concentric envelopes round it, like the core of an onion, or the innermost of a nest of boxes. First, he has his natural garment of flesh and blood. Then, his artificial integuments, with their true skin of solid stuffs, their cuticle of lighter tissues, and their variously-tinted pigments. Thirdly, his domicile, be



it a single chamber or a stately mansion. And then, the whole visible world, in which Time buttons him up as in a loose outside wrapper.

You shall observe, — the Professor said, — for, like Mr. John Hunter and other great men, he brings in that *shall* with great effect sometimes, — you shall observe that a man's clothing or series of envelopes does after a certain time mould itself upon his individual nature. We know this of our hats, and are always reminded of it when we happen to put them on wrong side foremost. We soon find that the beaver is a hollow cast of the skull, with all its irregular bumps and depressions. Just so all that clothes a man, even to the blue sky which caps his head, — a little loosely, — shapes itself to fit each particular being beneath it. Farmers, sailors, astronomers, poets, lovers, condemned criminals, all find it different, according to the eyes with which they severally look.

But our houses shape themselves palpably on our inner and outer natures. See a householder breaking up and you will be sure of it. There is a shell-fish which builds all manner of smaller shells into the walls of its own. A house is never a home until we

have crusted it with the spoils of a hundred lives besides those of our own past. See what these are and you can tell what the occupant is.

I had no idea, — said the Professor, — until I pulled up my domestic establishment the other day, what an enormous quantity of roots I had been making during the years I was planted there. Why, there was n't a nook or a corner that some fibre had not worked its way into; and when I gave the last wrench, each of them seemed to shriek like a mandrake as it broke its hold and came away.

There is nothing that happens, you know, which must not inevitably, and which does not actually, photograph itself in every conceivable aspect and in all dimensions. The infinite galleries of the Past await but one brief process and all their pictures will be called out and fixed forever. We had a curious illustration of the great fact on a very humble scale. When a certain bookcase, long standing in one place, for which it was built, was removed, there was the exact image on the wall of the whole, and of many of its portions. But in the midst of this picture was another, — the precise outline of

a map which had hung on the wall before the bookcase was built. We had all forgotten everything about the map until we saw its photograph on the wall. Then we remembered it, as some day or other we may remember a sin which has been built over and covered up, when this lower universe is pulled away from before the wall of Infinity, where the wrong-doing stands self-recorded.

The Professor lived in that house a long time — not twenty years, but pretty near it. When he entered that door, two shadows glided over the threshold; five lingered in the door-way when he passed through it for the last time, — and one of the shadows was claimed by its owner to be longer than his own. What changes he saw in that quiet place! Death rained through every roof but his; children came into life, grew to maturity, wedded, faded away, threw themselves away; the whole drama of life was played in that stock company's theatre of a dozen houses, one of which was his, and no deep sorrow or severe calamity ever entered his dwelling. Peace be to those walls, forever, — the Professor said, — for the many pleasant years he has passed within them!

The Professor has a friend, now living at

a distance, who has been with him in many of his changes of place, and who follows him in imagination with tender interest wherever he goes. — In that little court, where he lived in gay loneliness so long, —

— in his autumnal sojourn by the Connecticut, where it comes loitering down from its mountain fastnesses like a great lord, swallowing up the small proprietary rivulets very quietly as it goes, until it gets proud and swollen and wantons in huge luxurious oxbows about the fair Northampton meadows, and at last overflows the oldest inhabitant's memory in profligate freshets at Hartford and all along its lower shores, — up in that caravansary on the banks of the stream where Ledyard launched his log canoe, and the jovial old Colonel used to lead the Commencement processions,— where blue Ascutney looked down from the far distance, and the hills of Beulah, as the Professor always called them, rolled up the opposite horizon in soft climbing masses, so suggestive of the Pilgrim's Heavenward Path that he used to look through his old "Dollond" to see if the Shining Ones were not within range of sight, — sweet visions, sweetest in those Sunday walks which carried them by the peaceful

Common, through the solemn village lying in cataleptic stillness under the shadow of the rod of Moses, to the terminus of their harmless stroll, — the patulous fage, in the Professor's classic dialect, — the spreading beech, in more familiar phrase, — [stop and breathe here a moment, for the sentence is not done yet, and we have another long journey before us,] —

— and again once more up among those other hills that shut in the amber-flowing Housatonic, — dark stream, but clear, like the lucid orbs that shine beneath the lids of auburn-haired, sherry-wine-eyed demi-blondes, — in the home overlooking the winding stream and the smooth, flat meadow; looked down upon by wild hills, where the tracks of bears and catamounts may yet sometimes be seen upon the winter snow; facing the twin summits which rise in the far North, the highest waves of the great land-storm in all this billowy region, — suggestive to mad fancies of the breasts of a half-buried Titaness, stretched out by a stray thunderbolt, and hastily hidden away beneath the leaves of the forest, — in that home where seven blessed summers were passed, which stand in memory like the

seven golden candlesticks in the beatific vision of the holy dreamer, —

— in that modest dwelling we were just looking at, not glorious, yet not unlovely in the youth of its drab and mahogany, — full of great and little boys' playthings from top to bottom, — in all these summer or winter nests he was always at home and always welcome.

This long articulated sigh of reminiscences, — this calenture which shows me the maple-shadowed plains of Berkshire and the mountain-circled green of Grafton beneath the salt waves which come feeling their way along the wall at my feet, restless and soft-touching as blind men's busy fingers, — is for that friend of mine[1] who looks into the waters of the Patapsco and sees beneath them the same visions which paint them-

[1] "That friend of mine" was the late Joseph Roby, once a fellow-teacher with me in the Medical School of Dartmouth College, afterwards professor in the University of Maryland. He was a man of keen intellect and warm affections, but out of the range of his official duties seen of few and understood only by a very limited number of intimates. I used to refer to my wise friend so often, and he was so rarely visible, that some doubted if there was any such individual, or if he were not of the impersonal nature of Sairy Gamp's Mrs. Harris. I remember Emerson was one of these smiling sceptics.

selves for me in the green depths of the Charles.

— Did I talk all this off to the schoolmistress? — Why, no, — of course not. I have been talking with you, the reader, for the last ten minutes. You don't think I should expect any woman to listen to such a sentence as that long one, without giving her a chance to put in a word?

— What did I say to the schoolmistress? — Permit me one moment. I don't doubt your delicacy and good-breeding; but in this particular case, as I was allowed the privilege of walking alone with a very interesting young woman, you must allow me to remark, in the classic version of a familiar phrase, used by our Master Benjamin Franklin, it is *nullum tui negotii.*

When the schoolmistress and I reached the schoolroom door, the damask roses I spoke of were so much heightened in color by exercise that I felt sure it would be useful to her to take a stroll like this every morning, and made up my mind I would ask her to let me join her again.

EXTRACT FROM MY PRIVATE JOURNAL.

(*To be burned unread.*)

I am afraid I have been a fool; for I have told as much of myself to this young person as if she were of that ripe and discreet age which invites confidence and expansive utterance. I have been low-spirited and listless, lately, — it is coffee, I think, — (I observe that which is bought *ready-ground* never affects the head), — and I notice that I tell my secrets too easily when I am down-hearted.

There are inscriptions on our hearts, which, like that on Dighton Rock, are never to be seen except at dead-low tide.

There is a woman's footstep on the sand at the side of my deepest ocean-buried inscription!

— Oh, no, no, no! a thousand times, no! — Yet what is this which has been shaping itself in my soul? — Is it a thought? — is it a dream? — is it a *passion?* — Then I know what comes next.

— The Asylum stands on a bright and breezy hill; those glazed corridors are pleasant to walk in, in bad weather. But there are iron bars to all the windows. When it

is fair, some of us can stroll outside that very high fence. But I never see much life in those groups I sometimes meet; — and then the careful man watches them so closely! How I remember that sad company I used to pass on fine mornings, when I was a schoolboy! — B., with his arms full of yellow weeds, — ore from the gold mines which he discovered long before we heard of California, — Y., born to millions, crazed by too much plum-cake (the boys said), dogged, explosive, — made a Polyphemus of my weak-eyed schoolmaster, by a vicious flirt with a stick, — (the multi-millionnaires sent him a trifle, it was said, to buy another eye with; but boys are jealous of rich folks, and I don't doubt the good people made him easy for life), — how I remember them all!

I recollect, as all do, the story of the Hall of Eblis, in "Vathek," and how each shape, as it lifted its hand from its breast, showed its heart, — a burning coal. The real Hall of Eblis stands on yonder summit. Go there on the next visiting-day and ask that figure crouched in the corner, huddled up like those Indian mummies and skeletons found buried in the sitting posture, to lift its hand, — look upon its heart, and behold,

not fire, but ashes. — No, I must not think of such an ending! Dying would be a much more gentlemanly way of meeting the difficulty. Make a will and leave her a house or two and some stocks, and other little financial conveniences, to take away her necessity for keeping school. — I wonder what nice young man's feet would be in my French slippers before six months were over! Well, what then? If a man really loves a woman, of course he would n't marry her for the world, if he were not quite sure that he was the best person she could by any possibility marry.

— It is odd enough to read over what I have just been writing. — It is the merest fancy that ever was in the world. I shall never be married. She will; and if she is as pleasant as she has been so far, I will give her a silver tea-set, and go and take tea with her and her husband, sometimes. No coffee, I hope, though, — it depresses me sadly. I feel very miserably; — they must have been grinding it at home. — Another morning walk will be good for me, and I don't doubt the schoolmistress will be glad of a little fresh air before school.

— The throbbing flushes of the poetical intermittent have been coming over me from time to time of late. Did you ever see that electrical experiment which consists in passing a flash through letters of gold leaf in a darkened room, whereupon some name or legend springs out of the darkness in characters of fire?

There are songs all written out in my soul, which I could read, if the flash might pass through them, — but the fire must come down from heaven. Ah! but what if the stormy *nimbus* of youthful passion has blown by, and one asks for lightning from the ragged *cirrus* of dissolving aspirations, or the silvered *cumulus* of sluggish satiety? I will call on her whom the dead poets believed in, whom living ones no longer worship, — the immortal maid, who, name her what you will, — Goddess, Muse, Spirit of Beauty, — sits by the pillow of every youthful poet and bends over his pale forehead until her tresses lie upon his cheek and rain their gold into his dreams.



O MY lost Beauty! —hast thou folded quite
Thy wings of morning light
Beyond those iron gates
Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,
And Age upon his mound of ashes waits
To chill our fiery dreams,
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy streams?

Leave me not fading in these weeds of care,
Whose flowers are silvered hair! —
Have I not loved thee long,
Though my young lips have often done thee wrong
And vexed thy heaven-tuned ear with careless song?
Ah, wilt thou yet return,
Bearing thy rose-hued torch, and bid thine altar burn?

Come to me ! — I will flood thy silent shrine
With my soul's sacred wine,
And heap thy marble floors
As the wild spice-trees waste their fragrant stores
In leafy islands walled with madrepores
And lapped in Orient seas,
When all their feathery palms toss, plume-like, in the breeze.

Come to me ! — thou shalt feed on honeyed words,
Sweeter than song of birds ; —
No wailing bulbul's throat,
No melting dulcimer's melodious note,
When o'er the midnight wave its murmurs float,
Thy ravished sense might soothe
With flow so liquid-soft, with strain so velvet-smooth.

Thou shalt be decked with jewels, like a queen,
Sought in those bowers of green
Where loop the clustered vines
And the close-clinging dulcamara twines, —
Pure pearls of Maydew where the moonlight shines,
And Summer's fruited gems,
And coral pendants shorn from Autumn's berried stems.

Sit by me drifting on the sleepy waves, —
Or stretched by grass-grown graves,
Whose gray, high-shouldered stones,
Carved with old names Life's time-worn roll disowns,
Lean, lichen-spoted, o'er the crumbled bones
Still slumbering where they lay
While the sad pilgrim watched to scare the wolf away.

Spread o'er my couch thy visionary wing !
Still let me dream and sing, —
Dream of that winding shore

Where scarlet cardinals bloom, — for me no more, —
The stream with heaven beneath its liquid floor,
And clustering nenuphars
Sprinkling its mirrored blue like golden-chaliced stars !

Come while their balms the linden-blossoms shed ! —
Come while the rose is red, —
While blue-eyed Summer smiles
On the green ripples round yon sunken piles
Washed by the moon-wave warm from Indian isles,
And on the sultry air
The chestnuts spread their palms like holy men in prayer.

Oh, for thy burning lips to fire my brain
With thrills of wild sweet pain ! —
On life's autumnal blast,
Like shrivelled leaves, youth's passion-flowers are cast, —
Once loving thee, we love thee to the last ! —
Behold thy new-decked shrine,
And hear once more the voice that breathed "Forever thine."





XI

THE company looked a little flustered one morning when I came in, — so much so, that I inquired of my neighbor, the divinity-student, what had been going on. It appears that the young fellow whom they call John had taken advantage of my being a little late (I having been rather longer than usual dressing that morning) to circulate several questions involving a quibble or play upon words, — in short, containing that indignity to the human understanding, condemned in the passages from the distinguished moralist of the last century and the illustrious historian of the

present, which I cited on a former occasion, and known as a *pun*. After breakfast, one of the boarders handed me a small roll of paper containing some of the questions and their answers. I subjoin two or three of them, to show what a tendency there is to frivolity and meaningless talk in young persons of a certain sort, when not restrained by the presence of more reflective natures. — It was asked, "Why tertian and quartan fevers were like certain short-lived insects." Some interesting physiological relation would be naturally suggested. The inquirer blushes to find that the answer is in the paltry equivocation, that they *skip* a day or two. — "Why an Englishman must go to the Continent to weaken his grog or punch." The answer proves to have no relation whatever to the temperance-movement, as no better reason is given than that island- (or, as it is absurdly written, *ile and*) water won't mix. — But when I came to the next question and its answer, I felt that patience ceased to be a virtue. "Why an onion is like a piano" is a query that a person of sensibility would be slow to propose; but that in an educated community an individual

could be found to answer it in these words, — "Because it smell odious," *quasi*, it 's melodious, — is not credible, but too true. I can show you the paper.

Dear reader, I beg your pardon for repeating such things. I know most conversations reported in books are altogether above such trivial details, but folly will come up at every table as surely as purslain and chickweed and sorrel will come up in gardens. This young fellow ought to have talked philosophy, I know perfectly well; but he did n't, — he made jokes.]

I am willing, — I said, — to exercise your ingenuity in a rational and contemplative manner. — No, I do not proscribe certain forms of philosophical speculation which involve an approach to the absurd or ludicrous, such as you may find, for example, in the folio of the Reverend Father Thomas Sanchez, in his famous Disputations, "De Sancto Matrimonio." I will therefore turn this levity of yours to profit by reading you a rhymed problem, wrought out by my friend the Professor.



Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss-shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it — ah, but stay,
I 'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, —
Have you ever heard of that, I say ?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five,
Georgius Secundus was then alive, —
Snuffy old drone from the German hive ;
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss-shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking still,

Find it somewhere you must and will, —
Above or below, or within or without, —
And that 's the reason, beyond a doubt,
A chaise *breaks down*, but does n't *wear out.*

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*,")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown,
— "Fur," said the Deacon, "'t 's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That could n't be split nor bent nor broke, —
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of whitewood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum," —
Last of its timber, — they could n't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.

That was the way he "pat her through." —
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she 'll dew."

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren — where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss-shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; — it came and found
The Deacon's Masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten; —
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there 's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it. — You 're welcome. — No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the Earthquake-day. —
There are traces of age in the one-hoss-shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There could n't be, — for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there was n't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,

And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whippletree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss-shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson. — Off went they.

The parson was working his Sunday's text, —
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the — Moses — was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
— First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill, —
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock, —
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
— What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground.
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, —
All at once, and nothing first. —
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss-shay.
Logic is logic. That 's all I say.

— I think there is one habit, — I said to our company a day or two afterwards, — worse than that of punning. It is the gradual substitution of cant or slang terms for words which truly characterize their objects. I have known several very genteel idiots whose whole vocabulary had deliquesced into some half dozen expressions. All things fell into one of two great categories, — *fast* or *slow*. Man's chief end was to be a *brick*. When the great calamities of life overtook their friends, these last were spoken of as being *a good deal cut up*. Nine tenths of human existence were summed up in the single word, *bore*. These expressions come to be the algebraic symbols of minds which have grown too weak or indolent to discriminate. They are the blank checks of intellectual bankruptcy; — you may fill them up with what idea you like; it makes no difference, for there are no funds in the treasury upon which they are drawn. Colleges and good-for-nothing smoking-clubs are the places where these conversational fungi spring up most luxuriantly. Don't think I undervalue the proper use and application of a cant word or phrase. It adds piquancy to conversation, as a mushroom does to a sauce.

But it is no better than a toadstool, odious to the sense and poisonous to the intellect, when it spawns itself all over the talk of men and youths capable of talking, as it sometimes does. As we hear slang phraseology, it is commonly the dish-water from the washings of English dandyism, schoolboy or full-grown, wrung out of a three-volume novel which had sopped it up, or decanted from the pictured urn of Mr. Verdant Green, and diluted to suit the provincial climate.

— The young fellow called John spoke up sharply and said, it was "rum" to hear me "pitchin' into fellers" for "goin' it in the slang line," when I used all the flash words myself just when I pleased.

— I replied with my usual forbearance. — Certainly, to give up the algebraic symbol because *a* or *b* is often a cover for ideal nihility, would be unwise. I have heard a child laboring to express a certain condition, involving a hitherto undescribed sensation (as it supposed), all of which could have been sufficiently explained by the participle — *bored*. I have seen a country-clergyman, with a one-story intellect and a one-horse vocabulary, who has consumed his

valuable time (and mine) freely, in developing an opinion of a brother-minister's discourse which would have been abundantly characterized by a peach-down-lipped sophomore in the one word — *slow*. Let us discriminate, and be shy of absolute proscription. I am omniverbivorous by nature and training. Passing by such words as are poisonous, I can swallow most others, and chew such as I cannot swallow.

Dandies are not good for much, but they are good for something. They invent or keep in circulation those conversational blank checks or counters just spoken of, which intellectual capitalists may sometimes find it worth their while to borrow of them. They are useful, too, in keeping up the standard of dress, which, but for them, would deteriorate, and become, what some old fools would have it, a matter of convenience, and not of taste and art. Yes, I like dandies well enough, — on one condition.

— What is that, Sir? — said the divinity-student.

— That they have pluck. I find that lies at the bottom of all true dandyism. A little boy dressed up very fine, who puts his finger in his mouth and takes to crying, if

other boys make fun of him, looks very silly. But if he turns red in the face and knotty in the fists, and makes an example of the biggest of his assailants, throwing off his fine Leghorn and his thickly-buttoned jacket, if necessary, to consummate the act of justice, his small toggery takes on the splendors of the crested helmet that frightened Astyanax. You remember that the Duke said his dandy officers were his best officers. The "Sunday blood," the super-superb sartorial equestrian of our annual Fast-day, is not imposing or dangerous. But such fellows as Brummel and D'Orsay and Byron are not to be snubbed quite so easily. Look out for "la main de fer sous le gant de velours" (which I printed in English the other day without quotation-marks, thinking whether any *scarabæus criticus* would add this to his globe and roll in glory with it into the newspapers, — which he did n't do it, in the charming pleonasm of the London language, and therefore I claim the sole merit of exposing the same). A good many powerful and dangerous people have had a decided dash of dandyism about them. There was Alcibiades, the "curled son of Clinias," an accomplished young man, but

what would be called a "swell" in these days. There was Aristoteles, a very distinguished writer, of whom you have heard, — a philosopher, in short, whom it took centuries to learn, centuries to unlearn, and is now going to take a generation or more to learn over again. Regular dandy he was. So was Marcus Antonius; and though he lost his game, he played for big stakes, and it was n't his dandyism that spoiled his chance. Petrarca was not to be despised as a scholar or a poet, but he was one of the same sort. So was Sir Humphry Davy; so was Lord Palmerston, formerly, if I am not forgetful. Yes, — a dandy is good for something as such; and dandies such as I was just speaking of have rocked this planet like a cradle, — aye, and left it swinging to this day. — Still, if I were you, I would n't go to the tailor's, on the strength of these remarks, and run up a long bill which will render pockets a superfluity in your next suit. *Elegans "nascitur, non fit."* A man is born a dandy, as he is born a poet. There are heads that can't wear hats; there are necks that can't fit cravats; there are jaws that can't fill out collars — (Willis touched this last point in one of his earlier ambro-

types, if I remember rightly); there are *tournures* nothing can humanize; and movements nothing can subdue to the gracious suavity or elegant languor or stately serenity which belong to different styles of dandyism.

We are forming an aristocracy, as you may observe, in this country, — not a *gratiâ-Dei*, nor a *jure-divino* one, — but a *de-facto* upper stratum of being, which floats over the turbid waves of common life like the iridescent film you may have seen spreading over the water about our wharves, — very splendid, though its origin may have been tar, tallow, train-oil, or other such unctuous commodities. I say, then, we are forming an aristocracy; and, transitory as its individual life often is, it maintains itself tolerably, as a whole. Of course money is its corner-stone. But now observe this. Money kept for two or three generations transforms a race, — I don't mean merely in manners and hereditary culture, but in blood and bone. Money buys air and sunshine, in which children grow up more kindly, of course, than in close, back streets; it buys country places to give them happy and healthy summers, good nursing, good doc-

toring, and the best cuts of beef and mutton. When the spring-chickens come to market —— I beg your pardon, — that is not what I was going to speak of. As the young females of each successive season come on, the finest specimens among them, other things being equal, are apt to attract those who can afford the expensive luxury of beauty. The physical character of the next generation rises in consequence. It is plain that certain families have in this way acquired an elevated type of face and figure, and that in a small circle of city-connections one may sometimes find models of both sexes which one of the rural counties would find it hard to match from all its townships put together. Because there is a good deal of running down, of degeneration and waste of life, among the richer classes, you must not overlook the equally obvious fact I have just spoken of — which in one or two generations more will be, I think, much more patent than just now.

The weak point in our chryso-aristocracy is the same I have alluded to in connection with cheap dandyism. Its thorough manhood, its high-caste gallantry, are not so manifest as the plate-glass of its windows

and the more or less legitimate heraldry of its coach-panels. It is very curious to observe of how small account military folks are held among our Northern people. Our young men must gild their spurs, but they need not win them. The equal division of property keeps the younger sons of rich people above the necessity of military service. Thus the army loses an element of refinement, and the moneyed upper class forgets what it is to count heroism among its virtues. Still I don't believe in any aristocracy without pluck as its backbone. Ours may show it when the time comes, if it ever does come.[1]

— These United States furnish the greatest market for intellectual *green fruit* of all the places in the world. I think so, at any rate. The demand for intellectual labor is so enormous and the market so far from nice, that young talent is apt to fare like unripe gooseberries, — get plucked to make a fool of. Think of a country which buys eighty thousand copies of the "Proverbial

[1] The marble tablets and memorial windows in our churches and monumental buildings bear evidence as to whether the young men of favored social position proved worthy of their privileges or not during the four years of trial which left us a nation.

Philosophy," while the author's admiring countrymen have been buying twelve thousand! How can one let his fruit hang in the sun until it gets fully ripe, while there are eighty thousand such hungry mouths ready to swallow it and proclaim its praises? Consequently, there never was such a collection of crude pippins and half-grown windfalls as our native literature displays among its fruits. There are literary green-groceries at every corner, which will buy anything, from a button-pear to a pine-apple. It takes a long apprenticeship to train a whole people to reading and writing. The temptation of money and fame is too great for young people. Do I not remember that glorious moment when the late Mr. —— we won't say who, — editor of the —— we won't say what, offered me the sum of fifty cents *per* double-columned quarto page for shaking my young boughs over his foolscap apron? Was it not an intoxicating vision of gold and glory? I should doubtless have revelled in its wealth and splendor, but for learning that the *fifty cents* was to be considered a rhetorical embellishment, and by no means a literal expression of past fact or present intention.

— Beware of making your moral staple consist of the negative virtues. It is good to abstain, and teach others to abstain, from all that is sinful or hurtful. But making a business of it leads to emaciation of character, unless one feeds largely also on the more nutritious diet of active sympathetic benevolence.

— I don't believe one word of what you are saying, — spoke up the angular female in black bombazine.

I am sorry you disbelieve it, Madam, — I said, and added softly to my next neighbor, — but you prove it.

The young fellow sitting near me winked; and the divinity-student said, in an undertone, — *Optime dictum.*

Your talking Latin, — said I, — reminds me of an odd trick of one of my old tutors. He read so much of that language, that his English half turned into it. He got caught in town, one hot summer, in pretty close quarters, and wrote, or began to write, a series of city pastorals. Eclogues he called them, and meant to have published them by subscription. I remember some of his verses, if you want to hear them. — You, Sir (addressing myself to the divinity-stu-

dent), and all such as have been through college, or what is the same thing, received an honorary degree, will understand them without a dictionary. The old man had a great deal to say about "æstivation," as he called it, in opposition, as one might say, to *hibernation*. Intramural æstivation, or town-life in summer, he would say, is a peculiar form of suspended existence, or semi-asphyxia. One wakes up from it about the beginning of the last week in September. This is what I remember of his poem: —



An Unpublished Poem, by my late Latin Tutor

IN candent ire the solar splendor flames;
The foles, languescent, pend from arid rames;
His humid front the cive, anheling, wipes,
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine!

To me, alas! no verdurous visions come,
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum, —
No concave vast repeats the tender hue
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue!

Me wretched! Let me curr to quercine shades!
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids!
Oh, might I vole to some umbrageous clump, —
Depart, — be off, — excede, — evade, — erump!

— I have lived by the sea-shore and by the mountains. — No, I am not going to say which is best. The one where your place is, is the best for you. But this difference there is: you can domesticate mountains, but the sea is *ferœ naturæ*. You may have a hut, or know the owner of one, on the mountain-side; you see a light half-way up its ascent in the evening, and you know there is a home, and you might share it. You have noted certain trees, perhaps; you know the particular zone where the hemlocks look so black in October, when the maples and beeches have faded. All its reliefs and intaglios have electrotyped themselves in the medallions that hang round the walls of your memory's chamber. — The sea remembers nothing. It is feline. It licks your feet, — its huge flanks purr very pleasantly for you; but it will crack your bones and

eat you, for all that, and wipe the crimsoned foam from its jaws as if nothing had happened. The mountains give their lost children berries and water; the sea mocks their thirst and lets them die. The mountains have a grand, stupid, lovable tranquillity; the sea has a fascinating, treacherous intelligence. The mountains lie about like huge ruminants, their broad backs awful to look upon, but safe to handle. The sea smooths its silver scales until you cannot see their joints, — but their shining is that of a snake's belly, after all. — In deeper suggestiveness I find as great a difference. The mountains dwarf mankind and foreshorten the procession of its long generations. The sea drowns out humanity and time; it has no sympathy with either; for it belongs to eternity, and of that it sings its monotonous song forever and ever.

Yet I should love to have a little box by the sea-shore. I should love to gaze out on the wild feline element from a front window of my own, just as I should love to look on a caged panther, and see it stretch its shining length, and then curl over and lap its smooth sides, and by-and-by begin to lash itself into rage and show its white teeth and


H.P.

spring at its bars, and howl the cry of its mad, but, to me, harmless fury. — And then, — to look at it with that inward eye, — who does not love to shuffle off time and its concerns, at intervals, — to forget who is President and who is Governor, what race he belongs to, what language he speaks, which golden-headed nail of the firmament his particular planetary system is hung upon, and listen to the great liquid metronome as it beats its solemn measure, steadily swinging when the solo or duet of human life began, and to swing just as steadily after the human chorus has died out and man is a fossil on its shores?

— What should decide one, in choosing a summer residence? — Constitution, first of all. How much snow could you melt in an hour, if you were planted in a hogshead of it? Comfort is essential to enjoyment. All sensitive people should remember that persons in easy circumstances suffer much more from cold in summer — that is, the warm half of the year — than in winter, or the other half. You must cut your climate to your constitution, as much as your clothing to your shape. After this, consult your taste and convenience. But if you would be

happy in Berkshire, you must carry mountains in your brain; and if you would enjoy Nahant, you must have an ocean in your soul. Nature plays at dominos with you; you must match her piece, or she will never give it up to you.

— The schoolmistress said, in a rather mischievous way, that she was afraid some minds or souls would be a little crowded, if they took in the Rocky Mountains or the Atlantic.

Have you ever read the little book called "The Stars and the Earth?" — said I. — Have you seen the Declaration of Independence photographed in a surface that a fly's foot would cover? The forms or conditions of Time and Space, as Kant will tell you, are nothing in themselves, — only our way of looking at things. You are right, I think, however, in recognizing the idea of Space as being quite as applicable to minds as to the outer world. Every man of reflection is vaguely conscious of an imperfectly-defined circle which is drawn about his intellect. He has a perfectly clear sense that the fragments of his intellectual circle include the curves of many other minds of which he is cognizant. He often recognizes these as

manifestly concentric with his own, but of less radius. On the other hand, when we find a portion of an arc on the outside of our own, we say it *intersects* ours, but are very slow to confess or to see that it *circumscribes* it. Every now and then a man's mind is stretched by a new idea or sensation, and never shrinks back to its former dimensions. After looking at the Alps, I felt that my mind had been stretched beyond the limits of elasticity, and fitted so loosely on my old ideas of space that I had to spread these to fit it.

— If I thought I should ever see the Alps! — said the schoolmistress.

Perhaps you will, some time or other, — I said.

It is not very likely, — she answered. — I have had one or two opportunities, but I had rather be anything than governess in a rich family.

[Proud, too, you little soft-voiced woman! Well, I can't say I like you any the worse for it. How long will school-keeping take to kill you? Is it possible the poor thing works with her needle, too? I don't like those marks on the side of her forefinger.

Tableau. Chamouni. Mont Blanc in full

view. Figures in the foreground; two of them standing apart; one of them a gentleman of —— oh, — ah, — yes! the other a lady in a white cashmere, leaning on his shoulder. — The ingenuous reader will understand that this was an internal, private, personal, subjective diorama, seen for one instant on the background of my own consciousness, and abolished into black nonentity by the first question which recalled me to actual life, as suddenly as if one of those iron shop-blinds (which I always pass at dusk with a shiver, expecting to stumble over some poor but honest shop-boy's head, just taken off by its sudden and unexpected descent, and left outside upon the sidewalk) had come down in front of it "by the run."]

— Should you like to hear what moderate wishes life brings one to at last? I used to be very ambitious, — wasteful, extravagant, and luxurious in all my fancies. Read too much in the "Arabian Nights." Must have the lamp, — could n't do without the ring. Exercise every morning on the brazen horse. Plump down into castles as full of little milk-white princesses as a nest is of young sparrows. All love me dearly at once. — Charming idea of life, but too high-colored

for the reality. I have out-grown all this; my tastes have become exceedingly primitive, — almost, perhaps, ascetic. We carry happiness into our condition, but must not hope to find it there. I think you will be willing to hear some lines which embody the subdued and limited desires of my maturity.



"Man wants but little here below."

LITTLE I ask; my wants are few;
I only wish a hut of stone,
(A *very plain* brown stone will do,)
That I may call my own; —
And close at hand is such a one,
In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
Three courses are as good as ten; —
If Nature can subsist on three,
Thank Heaven for three. Amen!

I always thought cold victual nice; —
My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land; —
Give me a mortgage here and there. —
Some good bank-stock, — some note of hand,
Or trifling railroad share; —
I only ask that Fortune send
A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,
And titles are but empty names; —
I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo, —
But only near St. James; —
I 'm very sure I should not care
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 't is a sin
To care for such unfruitful things; —
One good-sized diamond in a pin, —
Some, *not so large*, in rings, —
A ruby and a pearl, or so,
Will do for me; — I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire;
(Good, heavy silks are never dear;) —
I own perhaps I *might* desire
Some shawls of true cashmere, —
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
So fast that folks must stop and stare:
An easy gait — two, forty-five —
Suits me; I do not care; —
Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
Titians and Raphaels three or four. —
I love so much their style and tone, —
One Turner, and no more, —
(A landscape, — foreground golden dirt, —
The sunshine painted with a squirt.) —

Of books but few, — some fifty score
For daily use, and bound for wear;
The rest upon an upper floor; —
Some *little* luxury *there*
Of red morocco's gilded gleam,
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems, — such things as these.
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride; —
One Stradivarius, I confess,
Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool; —
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
But *all* must be of buhl?
Give grasping pomp its double share, —
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch,
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
I shall not miss them *much* —
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content!

MY LAST WALK WITH THE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

(*A Parenthesis.*)

I can't say just how many walks she and I had taken together before this one. I found the effect of going out every morning was decidedly favorable on her health. Two pleasing dimples, the places for which were just marked when she came, played, shadowy, in her freshening cheeks when she smiled and nodded good-morning to me from the schoolhouse-steps.

I am afraid I did the greater part of the talking. At any rate, if I should try to report all that I said during the first half-dozen walks we took together, I fear that I might receive a gentle hint from my friends the publishers, that a separate volume, at my own risk and expense, would be the proper method of bringing them before the public.

— I would have a woman as true as Death. At the first real lie which works from the heart outward, she should be tenderly chloroformed into a better world, where she can have an angel for a governess, and feed on strange fruits which will make her all over again, even to her bones and marrow. — Whether gifted with the accident of beauty

or not, she should have been moulded in the rose-red clay of Love, before the breath of life made a moving mortal of her. Love-capacity is a congenital endowment; and I think, after a while, one gets to know the warm-hued natures it belongs to from the pretty pipe-clay counterfeits of them. — Proud she may be, in the sense of respecting herself; but pride, in the sense of contemning others less gifted than herself, deserves the two lowest circles of a vulgar woman's Inferno, where the punishments are Small-pox and Bankruptcy. — She who nips off the end of a brittle courtesy, as one breaks the tip of an icicle, to bestow upon those whom she ought cordially and kindly to recognize, proclaims the fact that she comes not merely of low blood, but of bad blood. Consciousness of unquestioned position makes people gracious in proper measure to all; but if a woman put on airs with her real equals, she has something about herself or her family she is ashamed of, or ought to be. Middle, and more than middle-aged people, who know family histories, generally see through it. An official of standing was rude to me once. Oh, that is the maternal grandfather, — said a wise old friend to me, — he was

a boor. — Better too few words, from the woman we love, than too many: while she is silent, Nature is working for her; while she talks, she is working for herself. — Love is sparingly soluble in the words of men; therefore they speak much of it; but one syllable of woman's speech can dissolve more of it than a man's heart can hold.

— Whether I said any or all of these things to the schoolmistress, or not, — whether I stole them out of Lord Bacon, — whether I cribbed them from Balzac, — whether I dipped them from the ocean of Tupperian wisdom, — or whether I have just found them in my head, laid there by that solemn fowl, Experience (who, according to my observation, cackles oftener than she drops real live eggs), I cannot say. Wise men have said more foolish things, — and foolish men, I don't doubt, have said as wise things. Anyhow, the schoolmistress and I had pleasant walks and long talks, all of which I do not feel bound to report.

— You are a stranger to me, Ma'am. — I don't doubt you would like to know all I said to the schoolmistress. — I sha'n't do it; — I had rather get the publishers to return the money you have invested in these pages.

Besides, I have forgotten a good deal of it. I shall tell only what I like of what I remember.

— My idea was, in the first place, to search out the picturesque spots which the city affords a sight of, to those who have eyes. I know a good many, and it was a pleasure to look at them in company with my young friend. There were the shrubs and flowers in the Franklin-Place front-yards or borders: Commerce is just putting his granite foot upon them. Then there are certain small seraglio-gardens, into which one can get a peep through the crevices of high fences, — one in Myrtle Street, or at the back of it, — here and there one at the North and South ends. Then the great elms in Essex Street. Then the stately horse-chestnuts in that vacant lot in Chambers Street, which hold their outspread hands over your head (as I said in my poem the other day), and look as if they were whispering, "May grace, mercy, and peace be with you!" — and the rest of that benediction. Nay, there are certain patches of ground, which, having lain neglected for a time, Nature, who always has her pockets full of seeds, and holes in all her pockets,

has covered with hungry plebeian growths which fight for life with each other, until some of them get broad-leaved and succulent, and you have a coarse vegetable tapestry which Raphael would not have disdained to spread over the foreground of his masterpiece. The Professor pretends that he found such a one in Charles Street, which, in its dare-devil impudence of rough-and-tumble vegetation, beat the pretty-behaved flower-beds of the Public Garden as ignominiously as a group of young tatterdemalions playing pitch-and-toss beats a row of Sunday-school-boys with their teacher at their head.

But then the Professor has one of his burrows in that region, and puts everything in high colors relating to it. That is his way about everything. — I hold any man cheap, — he said, — of whom nothing stronger can be uttered than that all his geese are swans. — How is that, Professor ? — said I ; — I should have set you down for one of that sort. — Sir, — said he, — I am proud to say, that Nature has so far enriched me, that I cannot own so much as a *duck* without seeing in it as pretty a swan as ever swam the basin in the garden of the Luxembourg.

And the Professor showed the whites of his eyes devoutly, like one returning thanks after a dinner of many courses.

I don't know anything sweeter than this leaking in of Nature through all the cracks in the walls and floors of cities. You heap up a million tons of hewn rocks on a square mile or two of earth which was green once. The trees look down from the hill-sides and ask each other, as they stand on tiptoe, — "What are these people about?" And the small herbs at their feet look up and whisper back, — "We will go and see." So the small herbs pack themselves up in the least possible bundles, and wait until the wind steals to them at night and whispers, — "Come with me." Then they go softly with it into the great city, — one to a cleft in the pavement, one to a spout on the roof, one to a seam in the marbles over a rich gentleman's bones, and one to the grave without a stone where nothing but a man is buried, — and there they grow, looking down on the generations of men from mouldy roofs, looking up from between the less-trodden pavements, looking out through iron cemetery-railings. Listen to them, when there is only a light breath stirring, and you will

hear them saying to each other, — "Wait awhile!" The words run along the telegraph of those narrow green lines that border the roads leading from the city, until they reach the slope of the hills, and the trees repeat in low murmurs to each other, — "Wait awhile!" By-and-by the flow of life in the streets ebbs, and the old leafy inhabitants — the smaller tribes always in front — saunter in, one by one, very careless seemingly, but very tenacious, until they swarm so that the great stones gape from each other with the crowding of their roots, and the feldspar begins to be picked out of the granite to find them food. At last the trees take up their solemn line of march, and never rest until they have encamped in the market-place. Wait long enough and you will find an old doting oak hugging a huge worn block in its yellow underground arms; that was the corner-stone of the State-House. Oh, so patient she is, this imperturbable Nature!

— Let us cry! —

But all this has nothing to do with my walks and talks with the schoolmistress. I did not say that I would not tell you something about them. Let me alone, and I

shall talk to you more than I ought to, probably. We never tell our secrets to people that pump for them.

Books we talked about, and education. It was her duty to know something of these, and of course she did. Perhaps I was somewhat more learned than she, but I found that the difference between her reading and mine was like that of a man's and a woman's dusting a library. The man flaps about with a bunch of feathers; the woman goes to work softly with a cloth. She does not raise half the dust, nor fill her own eyes and mouth with it, — but she goes into all the corners and attends to the leaves as much as to the covers. — Books are the *negative* pictures of thought, and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images, the more nicely the finest lines are reproduced. A woman (of the right kind), reading after a man, follows him as Ruth followed the reapers of Boaz, and her gleanings are often the finest of the wheat.

But it was in talking of Life that we came most nearly together. I thought I knew something about that, — that I could speak or write about it somewhat to the purpose.

To take up this fluid earthly being of ours as a sponge sucks up water, — to be steeped and soaked in its realities as a hide fills its pores lying seven years in a tan-pit, — to have winnowed every wave of it as a mill-wheel works up the stream that runs through the flume upon its float-boards, — to have curled up in the keenest spasms and flattened out in the laxest languors of this breathing-sickness, which keeps certain parcels of matter uneasy for three or four score years, — to have fought all the devils and clasped all the angels of its delirium, — and then, just at the point when the white-hot passions have cooled down to cherry-red, plunge our experience into the ice-cold stream of some human language or other, one might think would end in a rhapsody with something of spring and temper in it. All this I thought my power and province.

The schoolmistress had tried life, too. Once in a while one meets with a single soul greater than all the living pageant which passes before it. As the pale astronomer sits in his study with sunken eyes and thin fingers, and weighs Uranus or Neptune as in a balance, so there are meek, slight women who have weighed all which this plan-

etary life can offer, and hold it like a bauble in the palm of their slender hands. This was one of them. Fortune had left her, sorrow had baptized her ; the routine of labor and the loneliness of almost friendless city-life were before her. Yet, as I looked upon her tranquil face, gradually regaining a cheerfulness which was often sprightly, as she became interested in the various matters we talked about and places we visited, I saw that eye and lip and every shifting lineament were made for love, — unconscious of their sweet office as yet, and meeting the cold aspect of Duty with the natural graces which were meant for the reward of nothing less than the Great Passion.

— I never addressed one word of love to the schoolmistress in the course of these pleasant walks. It seemed to me that we talked of everything but love on that particular morning. There was, perhaps, a little more timidity and hesitancy on my part than I have commonly shown among our people at the boarding-house. In fact, I considered myself the master at the breakfast-table ; but, somehow, I could not command myself just then so well as usual. The truth is, I had secured a passage to

Liverpool in the steamer which was to leave at noon, — with the condition, however, of being released in case circumstances occurred to detain me. The schoolmistress knew nothing about all this, of course, as yet.

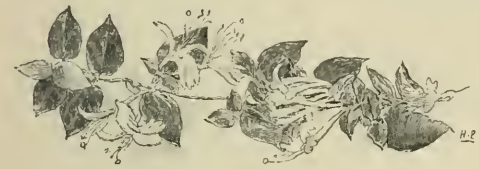
It was on the Common that we were walking. The *mall*, or boulevard of our Common, you know, has various branches leading from it in different directions. One of these runs down from opposite Joy Street southward across the whole length of the Common to Boylston Street. We called it the long path, and were fond of it.

I felt very weak indeed (though of a tolerably robust habit) as we came opposite the head of this path on that morning. I think I tried to speak twice without making myself distinctly audible. At last I got out the question, — Will you take the long path with me? — Certainly, — said the schoolmistress, — with much pleasure. — Think, — I said, — before you answer: if you take the long path with me now, I shall interpret it that we are to part no more! — The schoolmistress stepped back with a sudden movement, as if an arrow had struck her.

One of the long granite blocks used as

seats was hard by, — the one you may still see close by the Gingko-tree. — Pray, sit down, — I said. — No, no, she answered, softly, — I will walk the *long path* with you!

— The old gentleman who sits opposite met us walking, arm in arm, about the middle of the long path, and said, very charmingly, — "Good-morning, my dears!"





XII

I DID not think it probable that I should have a great many more talks with our company, and therefore I was anxious to get as much as I could into every conversation. That is the reason why you will find some odd, miscellaneous facts here, which I wished to tell at least once, as I should not have a chance to tell them habitually, at our breakfast-table. — We 're very free and easy, you know; we don't read what we don't like. Our parish is so large, one can't pretend to preach to all the pews at once. One can't be all the time trying to do the best of one's best;

if a company works a steam fire-engine, the firemen need n't be straining themselves all day to squirt over the top of the flagstaff. Let them wash some of those lower-story windows a little. Besides, there is no use in our quarrelling now, as you will find out when you get through this paper.]

— Travel, according to my experience, does not exactly correspond to the idea one gets of it out of most books of travels. I am thinking of travel as it was when I made the Grand Tour, especially in Italy. Memory is a net; one finds it full of fish when he takes it from the brook; but a dozen miles of water have run through it without sticking. I can prove some facts about travelling by a story or two. There are certain principles to be assumed, — such as these: — He who is carried by horses must deal with rogues. — To-day's dinner subtends a larger visual angle than yesterday's revolution. A mote in my eye is bigger to me than the biggest of Dr. Gould's private planets. — Every traveller is a self-taught entomologist. — Old jokes are dynamometers of mental tension; an old joke tells better among friends travelling than at home, — which shows that their minds are

in a state of diminished, rather than increased, vitality. There was a story about "strahps to your pahnts," which was vastly funny to us fellows, — on the road from Milan to Venice. — *Cœlum, non animum*, — travellers change their guineas, but not their characters. The bore is the same, eating dates under the cedars of Lebanon, as over a plate of baked beans in Beacon Street. — Parties of travellers have a morbid instinct for "establishing raws" upon each other. — A man shall sit down with his friend at the foot of the Great Pyramid and they will take up the question they had been talking about under "the great elm," and forget all about Egypt. When I was crossing the Po, we were all fighting about the propriety of one fellow's telling another that his argument was *absurd;* one maintaining it to be a perfectly admissible logical term, as proved by the phrase "reductio ad absurdum;" the rest badgering him as a conversational bully. Mighty little we troubled ourselves for *Padus*, the Po, "a river broader and more rapid than the Rhone," and the times when Hannibal led his grim Africans to its banks, and his elephants thrust their trunks into the yellow waters over which that pen-

dulum ferry-boat was swinging back and forward every ten minutes!

— Here are some of those reminiscences, with morals prefixed, or annexed, or implied.

Lively emotions very commonly do not strike us full in front, but obliquely from the side; a scene or incident in *undress* often affects us more than one in full costume.

"Is this the mighty ocean? — Is this all?"

says the Princess in Gebir. The rush that should have flooded my soul in the Coliseum did not come. But walking one day in the fields about the city, I stumbled over a fragment of broken masonry, and lo! the World's Mistress in her stone girdle — *alta mœnia Romæ* — rose before me and whitened my cheek with her pale shadow as never before or since.

I used very often, when coming home from my morning's work at one of the public institutions of Paris, to stop in at the dear old church of St. Etienne du Mont. The tomb of St. Genevieve, surrounded by burning candles and votive tablets, was there; the mural tablet of Jacobus Benignus Winslow was there; there was a noble organ with carved figures; the pulpit was

borne on the oaken shoulders of a stooping Samson; and there was a marvellous staircase like a coil of lace. These things I mention from memory, but not all of them together impressed me so much as an inscription on a small slab of marble fixed in one of the walls. It told how this church of St. Stephen was repaired and beautified in the year 16**, and how, during the celebration of its reopening, two girls of the parish (*filles de la paroisse*) fell from the gallery, carrying a part of the balustrade with them, to the pavement, but by a miracle escaped uninjured. Two young girls nameless, but real presences to my imagination, as much as when they came fluttering down on the tiles with a cry that outscreamed the sharpest treble in the Te Deum. (Look at Carlyle's article on Boswell, and see how he speaks of the poor young woman Johnson talked with in the streets one evening.) All the crowd gone but these two "filles de la paroisse," — gone as utterly as the dresses they wore, as the shoes that were on their feet, as the bread and meat that were in the market on that day.

Not the great historical events, but the personal incidents which call up single sharp

pictures of some human being in its pang or struggle, reach us most nearly. I remember the platform at Berne, over the parapet of which Theobald Weinzäpfli's restive horse sprung with him and landed him more than a hundred feet beneath in the lower town, not dead, but sorely broken, and no longer a wild youth, but God's servant from that day forward. I have forgotten the famous bears, and all else. — I remember the Percy lion on the bridge over the little river at Alnwick, — the leaden lion with his tail stretched out straight like a pump-handle, — and why? Because of the story of the village boy who must fain bestride the leaden tail, standing out over the water, — which breaking, he dropped into the stream far below, and was taken out an idiot for the rest of his life.

Arrow-heads must be brought to a sharp point and the guillotine-axe must have a slanting edge. Something intensely human, narrow, and definite pierces to the seat of our sensibilities more readily than huge occurrences and catastrophes. A nail will pick a lock that defies hatchet and hammer. "The Royal George" went down with all her crew, and Cowper wrote an exquisitely simple poem about it; but the leaf which

holds it is smooth, while that which bears the lines on his mother's portrait is blistered with tears.

My telling these recollections sets me thinking of others of the same kind which strike the imagination, especially when one is still young. You remember the monument in Devizes market to the woman struck dead with a lie in her mouth. I never saw that, but it is in the books. Here is one I never heard mentioned; — if any of the "Note and Query" tribe can tell the story, I hope they will. Where is this monument? I was riding on an English stage-coach when we passed a handsome marble column (as I remember it) of considerable size and pretensions. — What is that? — I said. — That, — answered the coachman, — is *the hangman's pillar*.[1] Then he told me how a man went

[1] It would have been well if I had consulted *Notes and Queries* before telling this story. A year or two before the time when I was writing, a number of communications relating to the subject were sent to that periodical. A correspondent called my attention to them, and other correspondents, — Miss H. P., of London, the librarian of a public institution at Dublin, a young gentleman, writing from Cornwall, and others, whose residences I do not now remember, wrote to me, mentioning stories like that which the coachman told me. The self-reproduction of the legend wherever there was a stone to

out one night, many years ago, to steal sheep. He caught one, tied its legs to-

hang it on, seems to me so interesting, as bearing on the philosophy of tradition, that I subjoin a number of instances from *Notes and Queries*.

In the first the thief's booty was a deer and not a sheep, as the common account made it. The incident not only involved a more distinguished quadruped, but also was found worthy of being commemorated in rhyme.

N. & Q., for January 5, 1856.

"In Potter's *Churnwood*, p. 179, a 'Legend of the Hangman's Stone,' in verse, is given, in which the death of John of Oxley is described.

. . . . . .

'One shaft he drew on his well-tried yew,
And a gallant hart lay dead;
He tied its legs, and he hoisted his prize,
And he toiled over Lubcloud brow.
He reached the tall stone, standing out and alone,
Standing then as it standeth now;
With his back to the stone he rested his load,
And he chuckled with glee to think
That the rest of his way on the down hill lay
And his wife would have spiced the strong drink.

. . . . . .

A swineherd was passing o'er great Toe's Head,
When he noticed a motionless man;
He shouted in vain — no reply could he gain —
So down to the gray stone he ran.
All was clear. There was Oxley on one side the stone.
On the other the down-hanging deer;
The burden had slipped, and his neck it had nipped;
He was hanged by his prize — all was clear.'

"'When I was a youth,' the same writer continues, 'there were two fields in the parish of Foremark, Derbyshire, called the Great and the Little Hangman's Stone. In the former there was a stone, five or six feet high,

gether, passed the rope over his head, and started for home. In climbing a fence, the

with an indentation running across the top of it, and there was a legend that a sheep-stealer, once upon a time having stolen a sheep, had placed it on the top of the stone, and that it had slipped off and strangled him with the rope with which it was tied, and that the indentation was made by the friction of the rope caused by the struggles of the dying man.' — C. S. Greaves."

N. & Q., April 5, 1856.

Similar Legends at Different Places. — "At the end of Lamber Moor, on the roadside between Haverford West and Little Haven, in the County of Pembroke, there is a stone about four feet high, called 'Hang Davy Stone,' connected with which is a tradition of the accidental strangling of a sheep-stealer, similar to the legend mentioned by Mr. Greaves with reference to the stone at Foremark. — J. W. Phillips."

N. & Q., May 17, 1856.

"The Hangman Stone. — It may be interesting to your correspondent, Mr. J. W. Phillips, to be informed that at about five miles from Sidmouth, on the road to Colyton, on the right hand side of the road, and near Bovey House, is a large stone known by the name of 'Hangman Stone.' The legend is precisely similar to that noticed by Mr. Phillips and by Mr. Greaves. — N. S. Heineker."

N. & Q., May 31, 1856.

"Hangman Stones. — Some years ago there was still to be seen, in a meadow belonging to me, situate near the northwestern boundary of the parish of Littlebury, in Essex, a large stone, the name of which, and the traditions attached to it, were identical with those recorded by your correspondents treating of Hangman Stones.

rope slipped, caught him by the neck, and strangled him. Next morning he was found

This stone was subsequently removed by the late Mr. Jabez Gibson to Saffron Walden, and still remains in his garden at that place. I have a strong impression that other 'hangman stones' are to be met with elsewhere, but I am unable to point out the exact localities. — Braybrooke."

"On the right side of the road between Brighton and Newhaven (about five miles, I think, from the former place), is a stone designated as above, and respecting which is told the same legend as that which is quoted by Henry Kensington. — H. E. C."

N. & Q., June 21, 1856.

"Hangman Stones. — At a picturesque angle in the road between Sheffield and Barnsley, and about three miles south of the latter place, there is a toll-bar called 'Hangman Stone Bar.' Attached to this title is the usual legend of a sheep-stealer being strangled by the kicking animal, which he had slung across his shoulders, and which pulled him backwards as he tried to climb over the stone wall inclosure with his spoil. I do not know that any particular stone is marked as the one on which the sheep was rested for the convenience of the thief in trying to make his escape, but the Jehu of the now extinct Barnsley mail always told this story to any inquiring passenger who happened to be one of five at top. — as quaint a four-in-hand as you shall see. — Alfred Gatty."

I have little doubt that the story told by the "Jehu," which my memory may have embellished a little, as is not unusual with travellers' recollections, was the one to which I listened as one of the five outsides, and in answer to my question. The country boys used to insist

hanging dead on one side of the fence and the sheep on the other; in memory whereof the lord of the manor caused this monument to be erected as a warning to all who love mutton better than virtue. I will send a copy of this record to him or her who shall first set me right about this column and its locality.[1]

And telling over these old stories reminds me that I have something which may interest architects and perhaps some other persons. I once ascended the spire of Strasburg Cathedral, which is the highest, I think (at present), in Europe. It is a shaft of stone filigree-work, frightfully open, so that the guide puts his arms behind you to keep you from falling. To climb it is a noonday nightmare, and to think of having climbed it crisps all the fifty-six joints of one's twenty digits. While I was on it, "pinnacled dim in the intense inane," a strong wind was blowing, and I felt sure that the spire was rocking. It swayed back and forward like

upon it in my young days that *stones grew*. It seems to me probable that a very moderate monolith may have grown in my recollection to "a handsome marble column," and that "the lord of the manor" was my own phrase rather than our coachman's.

[1] I sent two or three copies to different correspondents.

a stalk of rye or a cat-o'-nine-tails (bulrush) with a bobolink on it. I mentioned it to the guide, and he said that the spire did really swing back and forward, — I think he said some feet.

Keep any line of knowledge ten years and some other line will intersect it. Long afterwards I was hunting out a paper of Dumeril's in an old journal, — the "Magazin Encyclopédique" for *l'an troisième* (1795), when I stumbled upon a brief article on the vibrations of the spire of Strasburg Cathedral. A man can shake it so that the movement shall be shown in a vessel of water nearly seventy feet below the summit, and higher up the vibration is like that of an earthquake. I have seen one of those wretched wooden spires with which we very shabbily finish some of our stone churches (thinking that the lidless blue eye of heaven cannot tell the counterfeit we try to pass on it) swinging like a reed, in a wind, but one would hardly think of such a thing's happening in a stone spire. Does the Bunker-Hill Monument bend in the blast like a blade of grass? I suppose so.

You see, of course, that I am talking in a cheap way; — perhaps we will have some phi-

losophy by-and-by ; — let me work out this thin mechanical vein. — I have something more to say about trees. I have brought down this slice of hemlock to show you. Tree blew down in my woods (that were) in 1852. Twelve feet and a half round, fair girth ; — nine feet, where I got my section, higher up. This is a wedge, going to the centre, of the general shape of a slice of apple-pie in a large and not opulent family. Length, about eighteen inches. I have studied the growth of this tree by its rings, and it is curious. Three hundred and forty-two rings. Started, therefore, about 1510. The thickness of the rings tells the rate at which it grew. For five or six years the rate was slow, — then rapid for twenty years. A little before the year 1550 it began to grow very slowly, and so continued for about seventy years. In 1620 it took a new start and grew fast until 1714, then for the most part slowly until 1786, when it started again and grew pretty well and uniformly until within the last dozen years, when it seems to have got on sluggishly.

Look here. Here are some human lives laid down against the periods of its growth, to which they corresponded. This is Shake-

speare's. The tree was seven inches in diameter when he was born; ten inches when he died. A little less than ten inches when Milton was born; seventeen when he died. Then comes a long interval, and this thread marks out Johnson's life, during which the tree increased from twenty-two to twenty-nine inches in diameter. Here is the span of Napoleon's career; — the tree does n't seem to have minded it.

I never saw the man yet who was not startled at looking on this section. I have seen many wooden preachers, — never one like this. How much more striking would be the calendar counted on the rings of one of those awful trees which were standing when Christ was on earth, and where that brief mortal life is chronicled with the stolid apathy of vegetable being, which remembers all human history as a thing of yesterday in its own dateless existence!

I have something more to say about elms. A relative tells me there is one of great glory in Andover, near Bradford. I have some recollections of the former place, pleasant and other. [I wonder if the old Seminary clock strikes as slowly as it used to. My roommate thought, when he first came, it was the

bell tolling deaths, and people's ages, as they do in the country. He swore — (ministers' sons get so familiar with good words that they are apt to handle them carelessly) — that the children were dying by the dozen, of all ages, from one to twelve, and ran off next day in recess, when it began to strike eleven, but was caught before the clock got through striking.] At the foot of "the hill," down in town, is, or was, a tidy old elm, which was said to have been hooped with iron to protect it from Indian tomahawks (*Credat Hahnemannus*), and to have grown round its hoops and buried them in its wood. Of course, this is not the tree my relative means.

Also, I have a very pretty letter from Norwich, in Connecticut, telling me of two noble elms which are to be seen in the town. One hundred and twenty-seven feet from bough-end to bough-end. What do you say to that? And gentle ladies beneath it, that love it and celebrate its praises! And that in a town of such supreme, audacious, Alpine loveliness as Norwich! — Only the dear people there must learn to call it Norridge, and not be misled by the mere accident of spelling.

Nor*wich*.
Por*ch*mouth.
Cincinnat*ah*.

What a sad picture of our civilization!

I did not speak to you of the great tree on what used to be the Colman farm, in Deerfield, simply because I had not seen it for many years, and did not like to trust my recollection. But I had it in memory, and even noted down, as one of the finest trees in symmetry and beauty I had ever seen. I have received a document, signed by two citizens of a neighboring town, certified by the postmaster and a selectman, and these again corroborated, reinforced, and sworn to by a member of that extraordinary college-class to which it is the good fortune of my friend the Professor to belong, who, though he has *formerly* been a member of Congress, is, I believe, fully worthy of confidence. The tree "girts" eighteen and a half feet, and spreads over a hundred, and is a real beauty. I hope to meet my friend under its branches yet; if we don't have "youth at the prow," we will have "pleasure at the 'elm."

And just now, again, I have got a letter about some grand willows in Maine, and an-

other about an elm in Wayland, but too late for anything but thanks.[1]

[And this leads me to say, that I have received a great many communications, in prose and verse, since I began printing these notes. The last came this very morning, in the shape of a neat and brief poem, from New Orleans. I could not make any of them public, though sometimes requested to do so. Some of them have given me great pleasure, and encouraged me to believe I had friends whose faces I had never seen. If you are pleased with anything a writer says, and doubt whether to tell him of it, do not hesitate; a pleasant word is a cordial to one, who perhaps thinks he is tiring you, and so becomes tired himself. I purr very

[1] There are trees scattered about our New England towns worth going a dozen or a score of miles to see, if one only knew where to look for them. A mile from where I am now writing (Beverly Farms, Essex County, Massachusetts) is one of the noblest oaks I have ever seen, not distinguished so much for its size, though its branches must spread a hundred feet from bough-end to bough-end, as for its beauty and lusty promise. A few minutes' walk from the station at Rockport is a horse-chestnut which is remarkable for size of trunk and richness of foliage. I found that it measures eight feet and three inches in circumference, about four feet from the ground. There may be larger horse-chestnut trees in New England, but I have not seen or heard of them.

loud over a good, honest letter that says pretty things to me.]

— Sometimes very young persons send communications which they want forwarded to editors; and these young persons do not always seem to have right conceptions of these same editors, and of the public, and of themselves. Here is a letter I wrote to one of these young folks, but, on the whole, thought it best not to send. It is not fair to single out one for such sharp advice, where there are hundreds that are in need of it.

Dear Sir, — You seem to be somewhat, but not a great deal, wiser than I was at your age. I don't wish to be understood as saying too much, for I think, without committing myself to any opinion on my present state, that I was not a Solomon at that stage of development.

You long to "leap at a single bound into celebrity." Nothing is so commonplace as to wish to be remarkable. Fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else, — very rarely to those who say to themselves, "Go to, now, let us be a celebrated individual!" The struggle for fame, as such, commonly ends in notoriety; — that

ladder is easy to climb, but it leads to the pillory which is crowded with fools who could not hold their tongues and rogues who could not hide their tricks.

If you have the consciousness of genius, do something to show it. The world is pretty quick, nowadays, to catch the flavor of true originality; if you write anything remarkable, the magazines and newspapers will find you out, as the schoolboys find out where the ripe apples and pears are. Produce anything really good, and an intelligent editor will jump at it. Don't flatter yourself that any article of yours is rejected because you are unknown to fame. Nothing pleases an editor more than to get anything worth having from a new hand. There is always a dearth of really fine articles for a first-rate journal; for of a hundred pieces received, ninety are at or below the sea-level; some have water enough, but no head; some head enough, but no water; only two or three are from full reservoirs, high up that hill which is so hard to climb.

You may have genius. The contrary is of course probable, but it is not demonstrated. If you have, the world wants you more than you want it. It has not only a desire, but a passion, for every spark of gen-

ius that shows itself among us ; there is not a bull-calf in our national pasture that can bleat a rhyme but it is ten to one, among his friends, and no takers, that he is the real, genuine, no-mistake Osiris.

Qu'est ce qu'il a fait? What has he done? That was Napoleon's test. What have you done? Turn up the faces of your picture-cards, my boy! You need not make mouths at the public because it has not accepted you at your own fancy-valuation. Do the prettiest thing you can and wait your time.

For the verses you send me, I will not say they are hopeless, and I dare not affirm that they show promise. I am not an editor, but I know the standard of some editors. You must not expect to "leap with a single bound" into the society of those whom it is not flattery to call your betters. When "The Pactolian" has paid you for a copy of verses, — (I can furnish you a list of alliterative signatures, beginning with Annie Aureole and ending with Zoe Zenith), — when "The Rag-bag" has stolen your piece, after carefully scratching your name out, — when "The Nutcracker" has thought you worth shelling, and strung the kernel of your cleverest poem, — then, and not till then, you

may consider the presumption against you, from the fact of your rhyming tendency, as called in question, and let our friends hear from you, if you think it worth while. You may possibly think me too candid, and even accuse me of incivility; but let me assure you that I am not half so plain-spoken as Nature, nor half so rude as Time. If you prefer the long jolting of public opinion to the gentle touch of friendship, try it like a man. Only remember this, — that, if a bushel of potatoes is shaken in a market-cart without springs to it, the small potatoes always get to the bottom.

Believe me, etc., etc.

I always think of verse-writers, when I am in this vein; for these are by far the most exacting, eager, self-weighing, restless, querulous, unreasonable, literary persons one is like to meet with. Is a young man in the habit of writing verses? Then the presumption is that he is an inferior person. For, look you, there are at least nine chances in ten that he writes *poor* verses. Now the habit of chewing on rhymes without sense and soul to match them is, like that of using any other narcotic, at once a proof of feebleness and a debilitating agent. A young man

can get rid of the presumption against him afforded by his writing verses only by convincing us that they are verses worth writing.

All this sounds hard and rough, but, observe, it is not addressed to any individual, and of course does not refer to any reader of these pages. I would always treat any given young person passing through the meteoric showers which rain down on the brief period of adolescence with great tenderness. God forgive us if we ever speak harshly to young creatures on the strength of these ugly truths, and so, sooner or later, smite some tender-souled poet or poetess on the lips who might have sung the world into sweet trances, had we not silenced the matin-song in its first low breathings! Just as my heart yearns over the unloved, just so it sorrows for the ungifted who are doomed to the pangs of an undeceived self-estimate. I have always tried to be gentle with the most hopeless cases. My experience, however, has not been encouraging.

— X. Y., æt. 18, a cheaply-got-up youth with narrow jaws, and broad, bony, cold, red hands, having been laughed at by the girls in his village, and "got the mitten" (pronounced mitt*i*n) two or three times, falls to souling and controlling, and youth-

ing and truthing, in the newspapers. Sends me some strings of verses, candidates for the Orthopedic Infirmary, all of them, in which I learn for the millionth time one of the following facts: either that something about a chime is sublime, or that something about time is sublime, or that something about a chime is concerned with time, or that something about a rhyme is sublime or concerned with time or with a chime. Wishes my opinion of the same, with advice as to his future course.

What shall I do about it? Tell him the whole truth, and send him a ticket of admission to the Institution for Idiots and Feeble-minded Youth? One does n't like to be cruel, — and yet one hates to lie. Therefore one softens down the ugly central fact of donkeyism, — recommends study of good models, — that writing verse should be an incidental occupation only, not interfering with the hoe, the needle, the lapstone, or the ledger, — and, above all, that there should be no hurry in printing what is written. Not the least use in all this. The poetaster who has tasted type is done for. He is like the man who has once been a candidate for the Presidency. He feeds on the madder of his

delusion all his days, and his very bones grow red with the glow of his foolish fancy. One of these young brains is like a bunch of India crackers; once touch fire to it and it is best to keep hands off until it has done popping, — if it ever stops. I have two letters on file; one is a pattern of adulation, the other of impertinence. My reply to the first, containing the best advice I could give, conveyed in courteous language, had brought out the second. There was some sport in this, but Dulness is not commonly a game fish, and only sulks after he is struck. You may set it down as a truth which admits of few exceptions, that those who ask your *opinion* really want your *praise*, and will be contented with nothing less.

There is another kind of application to which editors, or those supposed to have access to them, are liable, and which often proves trying and painful. One is appealed to in behalf of some person in needy circumstances who wishes to make a living by the pen. A manuscript accompanying the letter is offered for publication. It is not commonly brilliant, too often it is lamentably deficient. If Rachel's saying is true, that "fortune is the measure of intelligence,"

then poverty is evidence of limited capacity, which it too frequently proves to be, notwithstanding a noble exception here and there. Now an editor is a person under a contract with the public to furnish them with the best things he can afford for his money. Charity shown by the publication of an inferior article would be like the generosity of Claude Duval and the other gentlemen highwaymen, who pitied the poor so much they robbed the rich to have the means of relieving them.

Though I am not and never was an editor, I know something of the trials to which they are submitted. They have nothing to do but to develop enormous calluses at every point of contact with authorship. Their business is not a matter of sympathy, but of intellect. They must reject the unfit productions of those whom they long to befriend, because it would be a profligate charity to accept them. One cannot burn his house down to warm the hands even of the fatherless and the widow.

THE PROFESSOR UNDER CHLOROFORM.

— You have n't heard about my friend the Professor's first experiment in the use of anæsthetics, have you?

He was mightily pleased with the reception of that poem of his about the chaise. He spoke to me once or twice about another poem of similar character, he wanted to read me, which I told him I would listen to and criticise.

One day, after dinner, he came in with his face tied up, looking very red in the cheeks and heavy about the eyes. — Hy'r'ye? — he said, and made for an arm-chair, in which he placed first his hat and then his person, going smack through the crown of the former as neatly as they do the trick at the circus. The Professor jumped at the explosion as if he had sat down on one of those small *caltrops* our grandfathers used to sow round in the grass when there were Indians about, — iron stars, each ray a rusty thorn an inch and a half long, — stick through moccasins into feet, — cripple 'em on the spot, and give 'em lockjaw in a day or two.

At the same time he let off one of those big words which lie at the bottom of the best man's vocabulary, but perhaps never turn up in his life, — just as every man's hair *may* stand on end, but in most men it never does.

After he had got calm, he pulled out a

sheet or two of manuscript, together with a smaller scrap, on which, as he said, he had just been writing an introduction or prelude to the main performance. A certain suspicion had come into my mind that the Professor was not quite right, which was confirmed by the way he talked; but I let him begin. This is the way he read it: —

Prelude.

I 'm the fellah that tole one day
The tale of the won'erful one-hoss-shay.
Wan' to hear another? Say.
— Funny, was n't it? Made *me* laugh, —
I 'm too modest, I am, by half, —
Made me laugh *'s though I sh'd split*, —
Cahn' a fellah like fellah's own wit?
— Fellahs keep sayin', — "Well, now that 's nice;
Did it once, but cahn' do it twice." —
Dōn' you b'lieve the'z no more fat;
Lots in the kitch'n 'z good 'z that.
Fus'-rate throw, 'n' no mistake, —
Han' us the props for another shake; —
Know I 'll try, 'n' guess I 'll win;
Here sh' goes for hit 'm ag'in!

Here I thought it necessary to interpose. — Professor, — I said, — you are inebriated. The style of what you call your "Prelude" shows that it was written under cerebral excitement. Your articulation is confused. You have told me three times in succession,

in exactly the same words, that I was the only true friend you had in the world that you would unbutton your heart to. You smell distinctly and decidedly of spirits. — I spoke, and paused; tender, but firm.

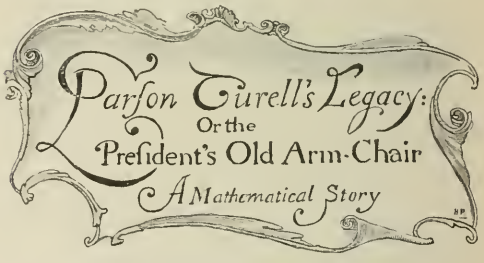
Two large tears orbed themselves beneath the Professor's lids, — in obedience to the principle of gravitation celebrated in that delicious bit of bladdery bathos, "The very law that moulds a tear," with which the "Edinburgh Review" attempted to put down Master George Gordon when that young man was foolishly trying to make himself conspicuous.

One of these tears peeped over the edge of the lid until it lost its balance, — slid an inch and waited for reinforcements, — swelled again, — rolled down a little further, — stopped, — moved on, — and at last fell on the back of the Professor's hand. He held it up for me to look at, and lifted his eyes, brimful, till they met mine.

I could n't stand it, — I always break down when folks cry in my face, — so I hugged him, and said he was a dear old boy, and asked him kindly what was the matter with him, and what made him smell so dreadfully strong of spirits.

Upset his alcohol lamp, — he said, — and spilt the alcohol on his legs. That was it. — But what had he been doing to get his head into such a state? — had he really committed an excess? What was the matter? — Then it came out that he had been taking chloroform to have a tooth out, which had left him in a very queer state, in which he had written the "Prelude" given above, and under the influence of which he evidently was still.

I took the manuscript from his hands and read the following continuation of the lines he had begun to read me, while he made up for two or three nights' lost sleep as he best might.



Facts respecting an old arm-chair.
At Cambridge. Is kept in the College there.
Seems but little the worse for wear.
That 's remarkable when I say

It was old in President Holyoke's day.
(One of his boys, perhaps you know,
Died, *at one hundred*, years ago.)
He took lodging for rain or shine
Under green bed-clothes in '69.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do. —
Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.
(Born in a house with a gambrel-roof, —
Standing still, if you must have proof. —
'Gambrel? — Gambrel?' — Let me beg
You 'll look at a horse's hinder leg, —
First great angle above the hoof, —
That 's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.)
— Nicest place that ever was seen, —
Colleges red and Common green,
Sidewalks brownish with trees between.
Sweetest spot beneath the skies
When the canker-worms don't rise, —
When the dust, that sometimes flies
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,
In a quiet slumber lies,
Not in the shape of unbaked pies
Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbor it seems to be,
Facing the flow of a boundless sea.
Rows of gray old Tutors stand
Ranged like rocks above the sand;
Rolling beneath them, soft and green,
Breaks the tide of bright sixteen, —
One wave, two waves, three waves, four,
Sliding up the sparkling floor;
Then it ebbs to flow no more,
Wandering off from shore to shore
With its freight of golden ore!

— Pleasant place for boys to play; —
Better keep your girls away;
Hearts get rolled as pebbles do
Which countless fingering waves pursue,
And every classic beach is strown
With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red stone.

But this is neither here nor there; —
I 'm talking about an old arm-chair.
You 've heard, no doubt, of Parson Turell?
Over at Medford he used to dwell;
Married one of the Mathers' folk;
Got with his wife a chair of oak, —
Funny old chair, with seat like wedge,
Sharp behind and broad front edge, —
One of the oddest of human things,
Turned all over with knobs and rings, —
But heavy, and wide, and deep, and grand, —
Fit for the worthies of the land, —
Chief-Justice Sewall a cause to try in,
Or Cotton Mather to sit, — and lie, — in.
— Parson Turell bequeathed the same
To a certain student. — Smith by name;
These were the terms, as we are told:
"Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and holde;
When he doth graduate, then to passe
To y^e^ oldest Youth in y^e^ Senior Classe.
On Payment of " — (naming a certain sum) —
"By him to whom y^e^ Chaire shall come;
He to y^e^ oldest Senior next,
And soe forever." — (thus runs the text.) —
"But one Crown lesse then he gave to claime,
That being his Debte for use of same."

Smith transferred it to one of the Browns
And took his money, — five silver crowns.

Brown delivered it up to MOORE,
Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.
Moore made over the chair to LEE,
Who gave him crowns of silver three.
Lee conveyed it unto DREW,
And now the payment, of course, was two.
Drew gave up the chair to DUNN, —
All he got, as you see, was one.
Dunn released the chair to HALL,
And got by the bargain no crown at all.
— And now it passed to a second BROWN,
Who took it, and likewise *claimed a crown.*
When *Brown* conveyed it unto WARE,
Having had one crown, to make it fair,
He paid him two crowns to take the chair;
And *Ware*, being honest, (as all Wares be,)
He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.
Four got ROBINSON; five got DIX;
JOHNSON *primus* demanded six;
And so the sum kept gathering still
Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill
— When paper money became so cheap,
Folks would n't count it, but said "a heap."
A certain RICHARDS, the books declare,
(A. M. in '90? I 've looked with care
Through the Triennial, — *name not there.*)
This person, Richards, was offered then
Eight score pounds, but would have ten;
Nine, I think, was the sum he took, —
Not quite certain, — but see the book.
— By and by the wars were still,
But nothing had altered the Parson's will.
The old arm-chair was solid yet,
But saddled with such a monstrous debt!
Things grew quite too bad to bear,
Paying such sums to get rid of the chair!

But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,
And there was the will in black and white,
Plain enough for a child to spell.
What should be done no man could tell.
For the chair was a kind of nightmare curse,
And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,
They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.
The Governor came, with his Light-horse Troop
And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-hoop;
Halberds glittered and colors flew,
French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,
The yellow fifes whistled between their teeth
And the bumble-bee bass-drums boomed beneath;
So he rode with all his band,
Till the President met him, cap in hand.
— The Governor "hefted" the crowns, and said, —
"A will is a will, and the Parson 's dead."
The Governor hefted the crowns. Said he, —
"There is your p'int. And here 's my fee.
These are the terms you must fulfil, —
On such conditions I BREAK THE WILL!"
The Governor mentioned what these should be.
(Just wait a minute and then you 'll see.)
The President prayed. Then all was still.
And the Governor rose and BROKE THE WILL!
— "About those conditions?" Well, now you go
And do as I tell you, and then you 'll know.
Once a year, on Commencement-day,
If you 'll only take the pains to stay,
You 'll see the President in the CHAIR,
Likewise the Governor sitting there.
The President rises; both old and young
May hear his speech in a foreign tongue,
The meaning whereof, as lawyers swear,



Is this: Can I keep this old arm-chair?
And then his Excellency bows,
As much as to say that he allows.
The Vice-Gnb. next is called by name;
He bows like t' other, which means the same.
And all the officers round 'em bow,
As much as to say that *they* allow.
And a lot of parchments about the chair
Are handed to witnesses then and there,
And then the lawyers hold it clear
That the chair is safe for another year.

God bless you, Gentlemen! Learn to give
Money to colleges while you live.
Don't be silly and think you 'll try
To bother the colleges, when you die,
With codicil this, and codicil that,
That Knowledge may starve while Law grows fat?
For there never was pitcher that would n't spill,
And there 's always a flaw in a donkey's will!

— Hospitality is a good deal a matter of latitude, I suspect. The shade of a palm-tree serves an African for a hut; his dwelling is all door and no walls; everybody can come in. To make a morning call on an Esquimaux acquaintance, one must creep through a long tunnel; his house is all walls and no door, except such a one as an apple with a worm-hole has. One might, very probably, trace a regular gradation between these two extremes. In cities where the evenings are generally hot, the people have

porches at their doors, where they sit, and this is, of course, a provocative to the interchange of civilities. A good deal, which in colder regions is ascribed to mean dispositions, belongs really to mean temperature.

Once in a while, even in our Northern cities, at noon, in a very hot summer's day, one may realize, by a sudden extension in his sphere of consciousness, how closely he is shut up for the most part. — Do you not remember something like this? July, between 1 and 2 P. M., Fahrenheit 96°, or thereabout. Windows all gaping, like the mouths of panting dogs. Long, stinging cry of a locust comes in from a tree, half a mile off; had forgotten there was such a tree. Baby's screams from a house several blocks distant; — never knew there were any babies in the neighborhood before. Tinman pounding something that clatters dreadfully, — very distinct but don't remember any tinman's shop near by. Horses stamping on pavement to get off flies. When you hear these four sounds, you may set it down as a warm day. Then it is that one would like to imitate the mode of life of the native at Sierra Leone, as somebody has described it: stroll into the market in natural costume, —

buy a watermelon for a halfpenny, — split it, and scoop out the middle, — sit down in one half of the empty rind, clap the other on one's head, and feast upon the pulp.

— I see some of the London journals have been attacking some of their literary people for lecturing, on the ground of its being a public exhibition of themselves for money. A popular author can print his lecture; if he deliver it, it is a case of *quæstum corpore*, or making profit of his person. None but "snobs" do that. *Ergo*, etc. To this I reply, — *Negatur minor.* Her most Gracious Majesty, the Queen, exhibits herself to the public as a part of the service for which she is paid. We do not consider it low-bred in her to pronounce her own speech, and should prefer it so to hearing it from any other person, or reading it. His Grace and his Lordship exhibit themselves very often for popularity, and their houses every day for money. — No, if a man shows himself other than he is, if he belittles himself before an audience for hire, then he acts unworthily. But a true word, fresh from the lips of a true man, is worth paying for, at the rate of eight dollars a day, or even of fifty dollars a lecture. The taunt must be an

outbreak of jealousy against the renowned authors who have the audacity to be also orators. The sub-lieutenants (of the press) stick a too popular writer and speaker with an epithet in England, instead of with a rapier, as in France. — Poh! All England is one great menagerie, and, all at once, the jackal, who admires the gilded cage of the royal beast, must protest against the vulgarity of the talking-bird's and the nightingale's being willing to become a part of the exhibition!

THE LONG PATH.

(*Last of the Parentheses.*)

Yes, that was my last walk with the *schoolmistress*. It happened to be the end of a term; and before the next began, a very nice young woman, who had been her assistant, was announced as her successor, and she was provided for elsewhere. So it was no longer the schoolmistress that I walked with, but — Let us not be in unseemly haste. I shall call her the schoolmistress still; some of you love her under that name.

— When it became known among the

boarders that two of their number had joined hands to walk down the long path of life side by side, there was, as you may suppose, no small sensation. I confess I pitied our landlady. It took her all of a suddin, — she said. Had not known that we was keepin' company, and never mistrusted anything partic'lar. Ma'am was right to better herself. Did n't look very rugged to take care of a femily, but could get hired haälp, she calc'lated. — The great maternal instinct came crowding up in her soul just then, and her eyes wandered until they settled on her daughter.

— No, poor, dear woman, — that could not have been. But I am dropping one of my internal tears for you, with this pleasant smile on my face all the time.

The great mystery of God's providence is the permitted crushing out of flowering instincts. Life is maintained by the respiration of oxygen and of sentiments. In the long catalogue of scientific cruelties there is hardly anything quite so painful to think of as that experiment of putting an animal under the bell of an air-pump and exhausting the air from it. [I never saw the accursed trick performed. *Laus Deo!*] There

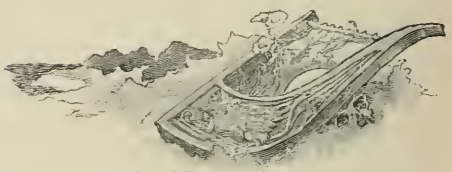
comes a time when the souls of human beings, women, perhaps, more even than men, begin to faint for the atmosphere of the affections they were made to breathe. Then it is that Society places its transparent bell-glass over the young woman who is to be the subject of one of its fatal experiments. The element by which only the heart lives is sucked out of her crystalline prison. Watch her through its transparent walls; — her bosom is heaving; but it is in a vacuum. Death is no riddle, compared to this. I remember a poor girl's story in the "Book of Martyrs." The "dry-pan and the gradual fire" were the images that frightened her most. How many have withered and wasted under as slow a torment in the walls of that larger Inquisition which we call Civilization!

Yes, my surface-thought laughs at you, you foolish, plain, overdressed, mincing, cheaply-organized, self-saturated young person, whoever you may be, now reading this, — little thinking you are what I describe, and in blissful unconsciousness that you are destined to the lingering asphyxia of soul which is the lot of such multitudes worthier than yourself. But it is only my surface-

thought which laughs. For that great procession of the UNLOVED, who not only wear the crown of thorns, but must hide it under the locks of brown or gray, — under the snowy cap, under the chilling turban, — hide it even from themselves, — perhaps never know they wear it, though it kills them, — there is no depth of tenderness in my nature that Pity has not sounded. Somewhere, — somewhere, — love is in store for them, — the universe must not be allowed to fool them so cruelly. What infinite pathos in the small, half-unconscious artifices by which unattractive young persons seek to recommend themselves to the favor of those towards whom our dear sisters, the unloved, like the rest, are impelled by their God-given instincts!

Read what the singing-women — one to ten thousand of the suffering women — tell us, and think of the griefs that die unspoken! Nature is in earnest when she makes a woman; and there are women enough lying in the next churchyard with very commonplace blue slate-stones at their head and feet, for whom it was just as true that "all sounds of life assumed one tone of love," as for Letitia Landon, of whom Eliza-

beth Browning said it; but she could give words to her grief, and they could not. — Will you hear a few stanzas of mine?



The Voiceless

WE count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber, —
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them; —
Alas for those who never sing,
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their hearts' sad story, —
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his cordial wine
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses, —

If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

I hope that our landlady's daughter is not so badly off, after all. That young man from another city, who made the remark which you remember about Boston State-house and Boston folks, has appeared at our table repeatedly of late, and has seemed to me rather attentive to this young lady. Only last evening I saw him leaning over her while she was playing the accordion, — indeed, I undertook to join them in a song, and got as far as "Come rest in this boo-oo," when, my voice getting tremulous, I turned off, as one steps out of a procession, and left the basso and soprano to finish it. I see no reason why this young woman should not be a very proper match for a man who laughs about Boston State-house. He can't be very particular.

The young fellow whom I have so often mentioned was a little free in his remarks, but very good-natured. — Sorry to have you go, — he said. — Schoolma'am made a mistake not to wait for me. Have n't taken anything but mournin' fruit at breakfast

since I heard of it. — *Mourning fruit*, — said I, — what 's that? — Huckleberries and blackberries, — said he; — could n't eat in colors, raspberries, currants, and such, after a solemn thing like this happening. — The conceit seemed to please the young fellow. If you will believe it, when we came down to breakfast the next morning, he had carried it out as follows. You know those odious little "saäs-plates" that figure so largely at boarding-houses, and especially at taverns, into which a strenuous attendant female trowels little dabs, sombre of tint and heterogeneous of composition, which it makes you feel homesick to look at, and into which you poke the elastic coppery teaspoon with the air of a cat dipping her foot into a wash-tub, — (not that I mean to say anything against them, for, when they are of tinted porcelain or starry many-faceted crystal, and hold clean bright berries, or pale virgin honey, or "lucent syrups tinct with cinnamon," and the teaspoon is of white silver, with the Hall-mark, solid, but not brutally heavy, — as people in the green stage of millionism will have them, — I can dally with their amber semi-fluids or glossy spherules without a shiver), — you know these small, deep

dishes, I say. When we came down the next morning, each of these (two only excepted) was covered with a broad leaf. On lifting this, each boarder found a small heap of solemn black huckleberries. But one of those plates held red currants, and was covered with a red rose; the other held white currants, and was covered with a white rose. There was a laugh at this at first, and then a short silence, and I noticed that her lip trembled, and the old gentleman opposite was in trouble to get at his bandanna handkerchief.

— "What was the use in waiting? We should be too late for Switzerland, that season, if we waited much longer." — The hand I held trembled in mine, and the eyes fell meekly, as Esther bowed herself before the feet of Ahasuerus. — She had been reading that chapter, for she looked up, — if there was a film of moisture over her eyes there was also the faintest shadow of a distant smile skirting her lips, but not enough to accent the dimples, — and said, in her pretty, still way, — "If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes" —

I don't remember what King Ahasuerus did or said when Esther got just to that point of her soft, humble words, — but I know what I did. That quotation from Scripture was cut short, anyhow. We came to a compromise on the great question, and the time was settled for the last day of summer.

In the mean time, I talked on with our boarders, much as usual, as you may see by what I have reported. I must say, I was pleased with a certain tenderness they all showed toward us, after the first excitement of the news was over. It came out in trivial matters, — but each one, in his or her way, manifested kindness. Our landlady, for instance, when we had chickens, sent the *liver* instead of the *gizzard*, with the wing, for the schoolmistress. This was not an accident; the two are *never* mistaken, though some landladies *appear* as if they did not know the difference. The whole of the company were even more respectfully attentive to my remarks than usual. There was no idle punning and very little winking on the part of that lively young gentleman who, as the reader may remember, occasionally interposed some playful question or remark,

which could hardly be considered relevant, — except when the least allusion was made to matrimony, when he would look at the landlady's daughter, and wink with both sides of his face, until she would ask what he was pokin' his fun at her for, and if he was n't ashamed of himself. In fact, they all behaved very handsomely, so that I really felt sorry at the thought of leaving my boarding-house.

I suppose you think, that, because I lived at a plain widow-woman's plain table, I was of course more or less infirm in point of worldly fortune. You may not be sorry to learn, that, though not what *great merchants* call very rich, I was comfortable, — comfortable, — so that most of those moderate luxuries I described in my verses on *Contentment* — *most* of them, I say — were within our reach, if we chose to have them. But I found out that the schoolmistress had a vein of charity about her, which had hitherto been worked on a small silver and copper basis, which made her think less, perhaps, of luxuries than even I did, — modestly as I have expressed my wishes.

It is a rather pleasant thing to tell a poor young woman, whom one has contrived to

win without showing his rent-roll, that she has found what the world values so highly, in following the lead of her affections. That was an enjoyment I was now ready for.

I began abruptly: — Do you know that you are a rich young person?

I know that I am very rich, — she said. — Heaven has given me more than I ever asked; for I had not thought love was ever meant for me.

It was a woman's confession, and her voice fell to a whisper as it threaded the last words.

I don't mean that, — I said, — you blessed little saint and seraph! — if there 's an angel missing in the New Jerusalem, inquire for her at this boarding-house! — I don't mean that! I mean that I — that is, you — am — are — confound it! — I mean that you 'll be what most people call a lady of fortune. — And I looked full in her eyes for the effect of the announcement.

There was n't any. She said she was thankful that I had what would save me from drudgery, and that some other time I should tell her about it. — I never made a greater failure in an attempt to produce a sensation.

So the last day of summer came. It was our choice to go to the church, but we had a kind of reception at the boarding-house. The presents were all arranged, and among them none gave more pleasure than the modest tributes of our fellow-boarders, — for there was not one, I believe, who did not send something. The landlady would insist on making an elegant bride-cake, with her own hands; to which Master Benjamin Franklin wished to add certain embellishments out of his private funds, — namely, a Cupid in a mouse-trap, done in white sugar, and two miniature flags with the Stars and Stripes, which had a very pleasing effect, I assure you. The landlady's daughter sent a richly bound copy of Tupper's Poems. On a blank leaf was the following, written in a very delicate and careful hand:

Presented to . . . by . . .
On the eve ere her union in holy matrimony.
May sunshine ever beam o'er her!

Even the poor relative thought she must do something, and sent a copy of "The Whole Duty of Man," bound in very attractive variegated sheepskin, the edges nicely marbled. From the divinity-student came the loveliest English edition of Keble's "Chris-

tian Year." I opened it, when it came, to the *Fourth Sunday in Lent*, and read that angelic poem, sweeter than anything I can remember since Xavier's "My God, I love Thee." —— I am not a Churchman, — I don't believe in planting oaks in flower-pots, — but such a poem as "The Rosebud" makes one's heart a proselyte to the culture it grows from. Talk about it as much as you like, — one's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion. A man should be a gentleman in his hymns and prayers; the fondness for "scenes," among vulgar saints, contrasts so meanly with that

> "God only and good angels look
> Behind the blissful scene," —

and that other, —

> "He could not trust his melting soul
> But in his Maker's sight," —

that I hope some of them will see this, and read the poem, and profit by it.

My laughing and winking young friend undertook to procure and arrange the flowers for the table, and did it with immense zeal. I never saw him look happier than when he came in, his hat saucily on one side, and a cheroot in his mouth, with a huge

bunch of tea-roses, which he said were for "Madam."

One of the last things that came was an old square box, smelling of camphor, tied and sealed. It bore, in faded ink, the marks, "Calcutta, 1805." On opening it, we found a white Cashmere shawl with a very brief note from the dear old gentleman opposite, saying that he had kept this some years thinking he might want it, and many more, not knowing what to do with it, — that he had never seen it unfolded since he was a young supercargo, — and now, if she would spread it on her shoulders, it would make him feel young to look at it.

Poor Bridget, or Biddy, our red-armed maid of all work! What must she do but buy a small copper breast-pin and put it under "Schoolma'am's" plate that morning, at breakfast? And Schoolma'am would wear it, — though I made her cover it, as well as I could, with a tea-rose.

It was my last breakfast as a boarder, and I could not leave them in utter silence.

Good-by, — I said, — my dear friends, one and all of you! I have been long with you, and I find it hard parting. I have to thank you for a thousand courtesies, and above

all for the patience and indulgence with which you have listened to me when I have tried to instruct or amuse you. My friend the Professor (who, as well as my friend the Poet, is unavoidably absent on this interesting occasion) has given me reason to suppose that he would occupy my empty chair about the first of January next. If he comes among you, be kind to him, as you have been to me. May the Lord bless you all! — And we shook hands all round the table.

Half an hour afterwards the breakfast things and the cloth were gone. I looked up and down the length of the bare boards over which I had so often uttered my sentiments and experiences — and — Yes, I am a man, like another.

All sadness vanished, as, in the midst of these old friends of mine, whom you know, and others a little more up in the world, perhaps, to whom I have not introduced you, I took the schoolmistress before the altar from the hands of the old gentleman who used to sit opposite, and who would insist on giving her away.

And now we two are walking the long path in peace together. The "schoolmis-

tress" finds her skill in teaching called for again, without going abroad to seek little scholars. Those visions of mine have all come true.

I hope you all love me none the less for anything I have told you. Farewell!



INDEX

Abuse, all good attempts get, 118.
Æstivation, 390.
Affinities and antipathies, 326.
Agassiz, 3.
Age, softening effects of, 118; begins when fire goes down, 225; Roman age of enlistment, 266; its changes a string of insults, 229.
A good time going, 331.
Air-pump, animal under, 449.
Album Verses, 22.
Alps, effect of looking at, 395.
American, the Englishman reinforced (a noted person thinks), 354.
Analogies, power of seeing, 121.
Anatomist's Hymn, The, 260.
Anglo-Saxons die out in America (Dr. Knox thinks), 353.
Anniversaries dreaded by the Poet, and why, 329.
Argonauta, 141.
Arguments, what are those which spoil conversation, 15.
Aristocracy, the forming American, 385; pluck the backbone of, 387.
Artists apt to act mechanically on their brains, 278.
Assessors, Heaven's, effect of meeting one of them, 135.
Asylum, the, 366.
Audience, average intellect of, 207; aspect of, 208; a compound vertebrate, 209.
Audiences very nearly alike, 209; good feeling and intelligence of, 210.
Author does not hate anybody, 325.
Authors, jockeying of, 54; purr if skilfully handled, 71; hate those who call them droll, 71; ashamed of being funny, 72; always praise after fifty, 119.
Automatic principles appear more prevalent the more we study, 124; mental actions, 199.
Averages, their awful uniformity, 207.

Babies, old, 230.
Bacon, Lord, 402.
Balzac, 223, 402.
Beauties, vulgar, their virtuous indignation on being looked at, 289.
Beliefs like ancient drinking-glasses, 22.
Bell-glass, young woman under, 450.
Benicia Boy, not challenged by the Professor, and why, 257.
Benjamin Franklin, the landlady's son, 18, 76, 83, 126, 127, 170, 200, 201, 365, 459.
Berkshire, 349, 364, 394.
Berne, leap from the platform at, 417.
Blake, Mr., his Jesse Rural, 132.
Blondes, two kinds of, 273.
"Blooded" horses, 54.
Boat, the Professor's own, description of, 250.
Boating, the Professor describes his, 245.
Boats, the Professor's fleet of, 244.
Books, hating, 89; society a strong solution of, 90; the

mind sometimes feels above them, 195; a man's and a woman's reading, 407.
Bores, all men are, except when we want them, 9.
Boston, Seven Wise Men of, their sayings, 184.
Bowie-knife, the Roman gladius modified, 27.
Brain, upper and lower stories of, 267; attempts to reach mechanically, 278.
Brains, seventy-year clocks, 275; containing ovarian eggs, how to know them, 291.
Bridget becomes a caryatid, 148; presents a breast-pin, 461.
Browne, Sir Thomas, admirable sentiment of, 136.
Browning, Elizabeth, 452.
Bruce's Address, alteration of, 68.
Bulbous-headed people, 10.
Bunker-Hill Monument, rocking of, 423.
Byron, his line about striking the electric chain, 114.

Cache, children make instinctively, 304.
Calamities, grow old rapidly in proportion to their magnitude, 46; the recollection of returns after the first sleep as if new, 46.
Calculating machine, 12; power, least human of qualities, 12.
Call him not old, 259.
Campbell, misquotation of, 104.
Canary-bird, swimming movements of, 125.
Cant terms, use of, 380.
Carlyle, his article on Boswell, 416.
Carpenter's bench, Author works at, 267.
Chambers Street, 403.
Chamouni, 395.
Characteristics, Carlyle's article, 80.
Charles Street, 404.
Chaucer compared to an Easter-Beurré, 121.
Chess-playing, conversation compared to, 92.
Children, superstitious little wretches and spiritual cowards, 303.
Chloroform, Professor, the, under, 436.
Chryso-aristocracy, our, the weak point in, 386.
Cicero *de Senectute*, Professor reads, 225; his treatise *de Senectute*, 233.
Cincinnati, how not to pronounce, 427.
Circles, intellectual, 394.
Cities, some of the smaller ones charming, 189; leaking of nature into, 405.
Clergy rarely hear sermons, 42.
Clergymen, their patients not always truthful, 126.
Clock of the Andover Seminary, 425.
Closet full of sweet smells, 114.
Clubs, advantages of, 92.
Coat, constructed on *a priori* grounds, 97.
Cobb, Sylvanus, Jr., 24.
Coffee, 366, 368.
Cold-blooded creatures, 193.
Coleridge, his remark on literary men's needing a profession, 207.
Coliseum, visit to, 415.
Comet, the late, 34.
Commencement day, like the start for the Derby, 138.
Common sense, as we understand it, 21.
Communications received by the Author, 428.
Company, the sad, 367.
Conceit, bred by little localized powers and narrow streaks of knowledge, 13; uses of, 13; natural to the mind as a centre to a circle, 14; makes people cheerful, 15.
Constitution, American female, 62; in choice of summer residence, 393.
Contentment, 397.
Controversy, hydrostatic paradox of, 168.
Conundrums indulged in by the company, 373; rebuked by the Author, 374.
Conversation, very serious matter, 8; with some persons weakening, 8; great faults of, 15; spoiled by certain kinds of argument, 15; a code of finalities necessary to, 15; com-

pared to Italian game of *mora*, 22; shapes our thoughts, 40; *Blair*-ing of reported, 59; one of the fine arts, 75; compared to chess-playing, 92; depends on how much is taken for granted, 92; of Lecturers, 94.
Cookeson, William, of All-Souls College, 127.
Copley, his portrait of the merchant-uncle, 30; of the great-grandmother, 31.
"Correspondent, our Foreign," 172.
Counterparts of people in many different cities, 204.
Cowper, 273; his lines on his mother's portrait, 418; his lines on the "Royal George," 417.
Creed, the Author's, 130.
Crinoline, Otaheitan, 26.
Crow and king-bird, 43.
Curls, flat circular, on temples, 26.

Dandies, uses of, 382; illustrious ones, 383, 384; men are born, 384.
Davidson, Lucretia and Margaret, 274.
Deacon's Masterpiece, The, 376.
Death as a form of rhetoric, 197; introduction to. 312.
Deerfield, elm in, 427.
Devizes, woman struck dead at, 418.
Dighton Rock, inscription on, 366.
Dimensions, three of solids, handling ideas as if they had, 124.
Divinity, doctors of, many people qualified to be, 42.
Divinity Student, the, 2, 62, 121, 123, 127, 129, 148, 162, 184, 185, 196, 201, 271, 278, 287, 292, 302, 326, 341, 342, 373, 382, 389, 459.
Doctor, old, his catalogue of books for light reading, 234.
Drinking-glasses, ancient, beliefs like, 22.
Droll, authors dislike to be called, 71.
Drunkenness often a punishment, 283.
Dull persons great comforts at times, 8; happiness of finding we are, 89.

Ears, voluntary movement of, 13.
Earth, not ripe yet, 34.
Earthquake, to launch the Leviathan, 106.
Eblis, hall of, 367.
Editors, appeal to their benevolence, 435; must get callous, 436.
Education, professional, most of our people have had, 41.
Eggs, ovarian, intellectual, 291.
Elm, American, 345; the great Johnston, 346; Hatfield, 349; Sheffield, 349; West-Springfield, 349; Pittsfield, 350; Newburyport, 350; Cohasset, 350; English and American, comparison of, 352.
Elms, Springfield, 348; first-class, 349; second-class, 350; Mr. Paddock's row of, 355; in Andover, 425; in Norwich, 426; in Deerfield, 427.
Emerson, 3.
Emotions strike us obliquely, 415.
Epithets follow isothermal lines, 168.
Erasmus, colloquies of, 127; Naufragium or "Shipwreck" of, 128.
Erectile heads, men of genius with, 9.
Essays, diluted, 96.
Essex Street, 403.
Esther, Queen, and Ahasuerus, 455, 456.
Eternity, remembering one's self in, 298.
Everlasting, the herb, its suggestions, 111.
Exercise, scientifically examined, 249.
Ex pede Herculem, 161.
Experience, a solemn fowl; her eggs, 402.
Experts in crime and suffering, 48.

Faces, negative, 208.
Facts, horror of generous minds for what are commonly called, 7; the brute beasts of the intelligence, 7; men of, 211.
Family, man of, 29.
Fancies, youthful, 396.
Farewell, the Author's, 461.

Fault found with everything worth saying, 164.
Feeling that we have been in the same condition before, 107; modes of explaining it, 108,109.
Feelings, every person's, have a front-door and a side-door, 190.
Fields, James T., 30.
Fifty cents, a figure of rhetoric, 388.
Flash phraseology, 380.
Flavor, nothing knows its own, 79.
Fleet of our companions, 137.
Flowers, why poets talk so much of, 339.
Franklin-place, front-yards in, 403.
French exercise, Benjamin Franklin's, 83, 201.
Friends shown up by story-tellers, 88.
Friendship does not authorize one to say disagreeable things, 73.
Front-door and side-door to our feelings, 190.
Fruit, green, intellectual, these United States a great market for, 387; mourning, 453.
Fuel, carbon and bread and cheese are equally, 232.
Funny, authors ashamed of being, 71.
"Fust-rate" and other vulgarisms, 41.

Geese for swans, 404.
Genius, a weak flavor of, 5; the advent of, a surprise, 79.
Gift-enterprises, Nature's, 79.
Gilbert, the French poet, 274.
Gil Blas, the archbishop served him right, 73; motto from, 295.
Gilman, Arthur, 30.
Gilpin, Daddy, 344.
Gingko-tree, 411.
Girl's story in "Book of Martyrs," 450.
Girls, two young, their fall from gallery, 416.
Gizzard and liver never confounded, 456.
Good-by, the Author's, 461.
Grammar, higher law in, 58.
Grammar of Assent, Newman's, 20.
Gravestones, transplanting of 356.
Green fruit, intellectual, 387.
Ground-bait, literary, 55.

Habit, what its essence is, 231.
Hand, the great wooden, 304.
"Haöw?" whether final, 162.
Harvard University, 29.
Hat, the old gentleman opposite's white, 263; the Author's youthful Leghorn, 264.
Hats, aphorisms concerning, 265.
Hawthorne, 3.
Hearts, inscriptions on, 366.
Heresy, burning for, experts in, would be found in any large city, 48.
Historian, the quotation from, on punning, 18.
Honey, emptying the jug of, 25.
Hoosac Tunnel, completion of the, 35.
Horse-chestnut at Rockport, 428.
Horses, what they feed on, 248.
Hospitality depends on latitude, 445.
Hot day, sounds of, 446.
Hôtel de l'Univers et des États Unis, 186.
Housatonic, the Professor's dwelling by, 363.
House, the body we live in, 358; Irishman's at Cambridgeport, 28.
Houses, dying out of, 358; killed by commercial smashes, 358; shape themselves upon our natures, 359.
Houynhnm Gazette, 338.
Huckleberries, hail-storm of, 341.
Hull, how Pope's line is read there, 190.
Huma, story of, 11.
Humanities, cumulative, 32.
Hyacinth, blue, 339, 340.
Hysterics, 132.

Ice in wine-glass, tinkling like cow-bells, 114.
Ideas, age of, in our memories, 46; handling them as if they had the three dimensions of solids, 124.
Imponderables move the world, 201.

Impromptus, 23.
Inherited traits show very early, 290.
Insanity, the logic of an accurate mind overtasked, 60; becomes a duty under certain circumstances, 61.
Instincts, crushing out of, 449.
Intemperance, the Author discourses of, 279.
Intermittent, the poetical, 369.
Inventive power, economically used, 353.
Iris, cut the yellow hair, 73.
Irishman's house at Cambridgeport, 28.
Island, the, 57.

Jailers and undertakers magnetize people, 48.
Jaundice, as a token of affection, 197.
John, the young fellow called, 78, 93, 107, 115, 148, 166, 260, 277, 286, 288, 308, 324, 342, 373, 381, 389, 453, 454, 460.
John and Thomas, their dialogue of six persons, 76, 77.
Johnson, Dr., his remark on attacks, 167; lines to Mrs. Thrale, 226.
Judgment, standard of, how to establish, 21.

Keats, 274.
Keble, his poem, 460.
"Kerridge," and other characteristic expressions, 161.
Kirke White, 275.
Knowledge, little streaks of specialized, breed conceit, 13.
Knuckles, marks of, on broken glass, 160.

Lady, the real, not sensitive if looked at, 289.
Lady-Boarder, the, with autograph-book, 9.
Landlady, 76, 107, 116, 158, 449, 459.
Landlady's daughter, 23, 26, 82, 204, 328, 342, 453, 459.
Landon, Letitia, 451.
Last Blossom, The, 241.
Latter-day Warnings, 34.
Laughter and tears, wind and water power, 132.
Lecturers, grooves in their minds, 94; talking in streaks out of their lectures, 94; get homesick, 210; attacks upon, 447.
Lectures, feelings connected with their delivery, 205; popular, what they should have, 206; old, 206; what they ought to be, 207.
Leibnitz, remark of, 2.
Les Sociétés Polyphysiophilosophiques, 201.
Letter to an ambitious young man, 429.
Letters with various requests, 101.
Leviathan, launch of, 105.
Life, experience of, 63; compared to transcript of it, 86; compared to books, 198; divisible into fifteen periods, 230; early, revelations concerning, 300; its experiences, 407, 408.
Lilac leaf-buds, 338, 340.
Lion, the leaden one at Alnwick, 417.
Liston thought himself a tragic actor, 134.
Literary pickpockets, 74.
Living Temple, The, 261.
Lochiel rocked in cradle when old, 120.
Log, using old schoolmates as, to mark our rate of sailing, 136.
Logical minds, what they do, 20.
Longfellow, 3.
Long path, the, 410, 448; walking together, 462.
Love-capacity, 401.
Love, introduction to, 312; its relative solubility in the speech of men and women, 402.
Lowell, James Russell, 33.
Ludicrous, a divine idea, 134, 135.
Luniversary, return of, 71.
Lyric conception hits like a bullet, 145.

Macaulay - flowers of Literature, 19.
"Magazine, Northern," got up by the "Come-Outers," 177.
Maine, willows in, 427.
Man of family, 29.
Map, photograph of, on the wall, 361.

Mare Rubrum, 181.
Marigold, its suggestions, 110, 111.
Mather, Cotton, 96, 442.
Meerschaums and poems must be kept and used, 149, 153.
Men, self-made, 28; all, love all women, 326.
Mésalliance, dreadful consequences of, 320.
Middle-aged female, takes offence, 43.
Millionism, green stage of, 454.
Milton compared to a Saint-Germain pear, etc., 121.
Mind, automatic actions of, 199.
Minds, classification of, 1; jerky ones fatiguing, 8; logical, what they do, 20; calm and clear, best basis for love and friendship, 194; saturation-point of, 197.
Minister, my old, his remarks on want of attention, 44.
Misery, a great one puts a new stamp on us, 48.
Mistortune, professional dealers in, 48.
Misprints, 70.
Molasses, Melasses, or Molossa's, 96.
Mora, Italian game of conversation compared to, 22.
Moralist, the great, quotation from, on punning, 18.
Motley, John Lothrop, 3, 37.
Mountains and sea, 391.
Mourning fruit, 453.
Mug, the bitten, 297, 298.
Muliebrity and femineity in voice, 321.
Musa, 370.
Muscular powers, when they decline, 233.
Muse, the, 369.
Music, its effects different from thought, 196.
Musicians, odd movements of, 125.
Mutual Admiration, Society of, 2.
My Lady's Cheek (verse), 229.
Myrtle Street, discovered by the Professor, 247; description of, 247; garden in, 403.

Nahant, 394.
Nature, Amen of, 340; leaking of, into cities, 405.
Nausnon Island, 57.
Nautilus, The Chambered, 142.
Nerve, olfactory, connection of, with brain, 112.
Nerve-playing, masters of, 192.
Nerve-tapping, 8.
Newman's Grammar of Assent, 20.
Newton, his speech about the child and the pebbles, 122.
Norwich, elms in, 426; how not to pronounce, 426.
Novel, one, everybody has stuff for, 85; why I do not write a, 87.

Oak, its one mark of supremacy, 345; at Beverly Farms, 428.
Ocean, the, two men walking by, 122.
Old Age, starting point of, 226; allegory of, 227; approach of, 229; how nature cheats us into, 231; habits the great mark of, 231; in the Professor's contemporaries, 239; remedies for, 243; excellent remedy for, 259.
Old Gentleman opposite, 4, 76, 88, 126, 147, 260, 263, 265, 292, 310, 313, 461, 462.
Old Man, a person startled when he first hears himself called so, 231.
Old Men, always poets if they ever have been, 148.
Omens, of childhood, 305.
One-hoss-shay, The Wonderful, 376.
"Our Sumatra Correspondence," 173.

Pail, the white pine, of water, 297.
Parallelism, without identity, in oriental and occidental nature, 353.
Parentheses, dismount the reader, 263.
Parson Turell's Legacy, 440.
Path, the long, 410.
Pears, men are like, in coming to maturity, 120.
Pedal locomotives, 251.
Peirce, 3.
Phosphorus, its suggestions, 110.

Photographs of the Past, 360.
Phrases, complimentary, applied to authors, what determines them, 169.
Physalia, 143.
Pie, the young fellow treats, disrespectfully, 115; the Author takes too large a piece of, 117.
Piecrust, poems, etc., written under influence of, 118.
Pillar, the Hangman's, 418 *et seq.*
Pinkney, William, 9.
Pirates, Danish, their skins on church doors, 158.
Plagiarism, Author's virtuous disgust for, 216.
Pocket-book fever, 307.
Poem — with the *slight alterations*, 69.
Poems, alterations of, 68; have a body and a soul, 145; green state of, 149; porous, like meerschaums, 153; post-prandial, the Professor's idea of, 329.
Poet, my friend the, 144, 190, 259, 266 *et seq.*, 271, 329, 330, 331, 333.
Poetaster who has tasted type, 434.
Poetical impulse external, 146.
Poetry uses white light for its main object, 73.
Poets love verses while warm from their minds, 148; two kinds of, 273; apt to act mechanically on their brains, 278.
Poets and artists, why likely to be prone to abuse of stimulants, 284.
Polish lance, 27.
Poor relation in black bombazine, 126, 149, 308, 389, 459.
Poplar, murder of one, 346.
Port-chuck, his vivacious sally, 264.
Portsmouth, how not to pronounce, 427.
Powers, little localized, breed conceit, 13.
Preacher, dull, might lapse into *quasi* heathenism, 42.
"Prelude," the Professor's, 438.
Prentiss, Dame, 298.
Pride in a woman, 401.
Prince Rupert's drops of literature, 56.
Principle against obvious facts, 82.
Private Journal, extract from my, 366.
Private theatricals, 63.
Probabilities provided with *buffers*, 81.
Profession, literary men should have a, 267.
Professor, my friend the, 36, 105, 118, 131, 159, 168, 177, 221 *et seq.*, 260, 266 *et seq.*, 288, 290, 291, 333, 357 *et seq.*, 375, 436 *et seq.*
Prologue, 65.
Public Garden, 404.
Pugilists, when "stale," 233.
Punning, quotations respecting, 18.
Puns, law respecting, 17; what they consist in, 72; surreptitiously circulated among the company, 373.
Pupil of the eye, simile concerning, the Author disgorges, 213.

QUANTITY, false, Sydney Smith's remark on, 162.

RACE of life, the, report of running in, 139.
Races, our sympathies go naturally with higher, 95.
Racing, not republican, 50; records of, 53.
Raphael and Michael Angelo, 303.
Raspail's proof-sheets, 36.
Rat des Salons à Lecture, 83.
Reading for the sake of talking, 199; a man's and a woman's, 407.
Recollections, trivial, essential to our identity, 310.
Relatives, opinions, of, as to a man's powers, 78.
Repeating one's self, 10.
Reputation, living on contingent, 88.
Reputations, conventional, 55.
"Retiring" at night, etiquette of, 309.
Rhode Island, near what place, 346.
Rhymes, old, we get tired of, 25; bad to chew upon, 432.
Ridiculous, love of, dangerous to literary men, 132.
Roby, Joseph, 364.

Roses, damask, 337, 341.
Rowing, nearest approach to flying, 251; its excellences, 253; its joys, 253.
"Royal George," the, Cowper's poem on, 417.
Rum, the term applied by low people to noble fluids, 282.

Saas-plates, 454.
Saddle-leather compared to sole-leather, 248.
"Sahtisfahction," a tepid expression, 161.
Saint Genevieve, visit to tomb of, 415.
"Saints and their Bodies," an admirable essay, 244.
Santorini's laughing-muscle, 288.
Saturday Club, the, of Boston, 3.
Saving one's thoughts, 39.
Schoolmistress, the, 46, 62, 88, 127, 158, 172, 184, 201, 272, 300 *et seq.*, 309, 313 *et seq.*, 337, 354, 365, 394, 395, 453 *et seq.*, 462.
"Science," the Professor's inward smile at her airs, 266.
Scientific certainty has no spring in it, 81.
Scientific knowledge partakes of insolence, 80.
Scraping the floor, effect of, 73.
Sea and mountains, 391.
Seed capsule (of poems), 297.
Self-determining power, limitation of, 130.
Self-esteem, with good ground, is imposing, 14.
Self-made men, 28.
Sentiments, all splashed and streaked with, 340.
Sermon, proposed, of the Author, 126.
Sermons, feeble, hard to listen to, but may act inductively, 42.
Seven Wise Men of Boston, their sayings, 184.
Shakespeare, old copy of, with flakes of piecrust between its leaves, 115.
Shawl, the Indian blanket, 27.
Ship, the, and martin-house, 308.
Ships, afraid of, 304.
Shop-blinds, iron, produce a shiver, 396.
Shortening weapons and lengthening boundaries, 27.
Sierre Leone, native of, enjoying himself, 446.
Sight, pretended failure of, in old persons, 258.
Sigourney, Mrs., 11.
Similitudes and analogies, ocean of, 123.
Sin, its tools and their handle, 184; introduction to, 311.
Smell, as connected with the memory, etc., 110.
Smile, the terrible, 286.
Smith, Sydney, surgical operation proposed by, 70; abused by London Quarterly Review, 133.
Sneaking fellows to be regarded tenderly, 326.
Sociétés, les, Polyphysiophilosophiques, 201.
Societies of mutual admiration, 3.
Soul, its concentric envelopes, 358.
Sounds, suggestive ones, 314, 315, 316.
Sparring, the Professor sees a little, and describes it, 256.
Spoken language, plastic, 40.
Sporting men, virtues of, 54.
Spring has come, 293.
Squirming when old falsehoods are turned over, 167.
Stage-ruffian, the, 76.
"Stars, the, and the Earth," a little book, referred to, 394.
State House, Boston, the hub of the solar system, 186.
"Statoo of deceased infant," 161.
Stillicidium, sentimental, 116.
Stone, flat, turning over of, 164.
Stranger, who came with young fellow called John, 185, 453.
"Strap!" my man John's story, 157.
Strasburg Cathedral, rocking of its spire, 423.
Striking in of thoughts and feelings, 198.
Stuart, his two portraits, 30.
Sullivan, John, 30.
Summer residence, choice of, 393.
Summer, 3.
Sun and Shadow, 60.
Sunday mornings, how the Author shows his respect for, 260.

Swans, taking *ducks* for, 404.
Swift, property restored to, 216.
Swords, Roman and American, 27.
Sylva Novanglica, 351.
Syntax, Dr., 344.

Talent, a little, makes people jealous, 4.
Talkers, real, 211.
Talking like playing at a mark with an engine, 40; one of the fine arts, 75.
Teapot, literary, 90.
The Last Blossom, 241.
The Old Man Dreams, 98.
The Two Armies, 334.
The Voiceless, 452.
Theological students, we all are, 42.
Thought revolves in cycles, 106; if uttered, is a kind of excretion, 291.
Thoughts may be original, though often before uttered, 11; saving, 39; shaped in conversation, 40; tell worst to minister and best to young people, 44; my best seem always old, 45; real, knock out somebody's wind, 167.
Thought-sprinklers, 40.
Time and space, 394.
Tobacco-stain may strike into character, 151.
Tobacco-stopper, lovely one, 150.
Towns, small, not more modest than cities, 187.
Toy, Author carves a wonderful, at Marseilles, 267.
Toys moved by sand, caution from one, 117.
Travel, maxims relating to, 413; recollections of, 414.
Tree, growth of, as shown by rings of wood, 424; slice of a hemlock, 424; its growth compared to human lives, 424, 425.
Trees, great, 342; mother-idea in each kind of, 344; afraid of measuring-tape, 347; Mr. Emerson's report on, 348; of America, our friend's interesting work on, 351.
Tree-wives, 342.
Triads, writing in, 124.
Trois Frères, dinners at the, 113.
Trotting, democratic and favorable to many virtues, 53; matches not races, 54.
Truth, primary relations with, 20.
Truths and lies compared to cubes and spheres, 171.
Tupper, 24, 459.
Tupperian wisdom, 402.
Tutor, my late Latin, his verses, 390.
Tyburn, 48.

Unloved, the, 451.

Veneering in conversation, 212.
Verse, proper medium for revealing our secrets, 87.
Verses, Album, 22; abstinence from writing, the mark of a poet, 299.
Verse-writers, their peculiarities, 432.
Violins, soaked in music, 152; take a century to dry, 154.
Virtues, negative, 389.
Visitors, getting rid of, when their visit is over, 24.
Voice, the Teutonic maiden's, 319; the German woman's, 320; the little child's in the hospital, 321.
Voices, certain female, 317; fearfully sweet ones, 318; hard and sharp, 317; people do not know their own, 323; sweet must belong to good spirits, 323.
Voleur, brand of, on galley rogues, 156.
Volume, man of one, 212.

Walking arm against arm, 26; laws of, 105; the Professor sanctions, 247; riding and rowing compared with, 249, 250.
Wasp, sloop of war, 306.
Watch-paper, the old gentleman's, 313.
Water, the white-pine pail of, 297.
Wedding, the, 462.
Wedding-presents, the, 459.
Wellington, gentle in his old age, 120.
What we all think, 217.
Will, compared to a drop of water in a crystal, 125, 126.
Willows in Maine, 427.

Wine of ancients, 99.
Wit takes imperfect views of things, 72.
Woman, an excellent instrument for a nerve-player, 192; to love a, must see her through a pin-hole, 329; must be true as death, 400; love-capacity in, 401; pride in, 401; marks of low and bad blood in, 401; why she should not say too much, 402.
Woman, young, advice to, 70; first to detect a poet, 272; inspire poets, 272; their praise the poet's reward, 272; all men love all, 326; all, love all men, 328; pictures of, 328; who have weighed all that life can offer, 408.
Woodbridge, Benjamin, his grave, 355, 356.
World, old and new, comparison of their types of organization, 351.
Writing with feet in hot water, 10; like shooting with a rifle, 40.

Yes ? in conversation, 26.
Yoricks, 30.
Young Fellow called John, 78, 93, 107, 115, 148, 166, 260, 277, 286, 287, 308, 324, 342, 373, 381, 389, 453, 460.
Young Lady come to be finished off, 14.
Youth, flakes off like button-wood bark, 229; American, not perfect type of physical humanity, 254; and age, what Author means by, 296.
Zimmermann's Treatise on Solitude, 9.

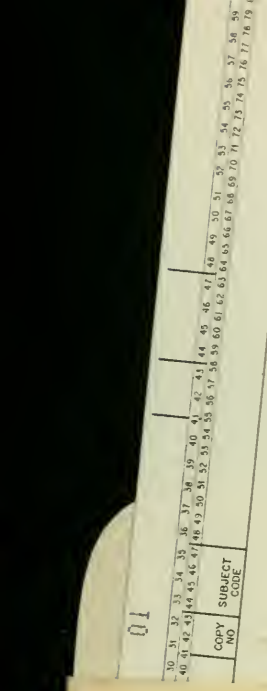
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